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EAST TIMOR AND WEST IRIAN

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MINORITY
RIGHTS
GROUP

The **MINORITY RIGHTS GROUP LTD.** is an international research and information unit registered in Britain as an educational trust under the Charities Act of 1960. Its principal aims are —

- To secure justice for minority or majority groups suffering discrimination, by investigating their situation and publicising the facts as widely as possible, to educate and alert public opinion throughout the world.
- To help prevent, through publicity about violations of human rights, such problems from developing into dangerous and destructive conflicts which, when polarised, are very difficult to resolve; and
- To foster, by its research findings, international understanding of the factors which create prejudiced treatment and group tensions, thus helping to promote the growth of a world conscience regarding human rights.

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EAST TIMOR AND WEST IRIAN

By Dr. Keith Suter

CONTENTS

Foreword 3
Introduction 3
Maps 4
Indonesia 5
  History 5
  Indonesia Today 6
  Human Rights 7
  Diversity in Unity 7
  The Islamic Impact 7
  Western Modernity 8
  The Chinese 9
  The South Moluccans 9
West Irian 10
  West Irian before 1963 11
  West Irian – A Description 12
  West Irian in Rebellion 12
  Recent Developments 13
East Timor 14
  East Timor: Geography and History 14
  From Colony to Independence to Indonesian Invasion 15
  Indonesia's Involvement in East Timor 16
  Indonesia's Impact 17
  East Timor and the Protection of Human Rights 17
References 19
Appendix by Sue Nichterlein 21
Bibliography 24

THE UNITED NATIONS
UNIVERSAL DECLARATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS

Whereas recognition of the inherent dignity and of the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family is the foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world.

Whereas disregard and contempt for human rights have resulted in barbarous acts which have outraged the conscience of mankind, and the advent of a world in which human beings shall enjoy freedom of speech and belief and freedom from any fear and want has been proclaimed as the highest aspiration of the common people,

Whereas it is essential, if a man is not to be compelled to have recourse, as a last resort, to rebellion against tyranny and oppression, that human rights should be protected by the rule of law,

Whereas it is essential to promote the development of friendly relations between nations,

Whereas the peoples of the United Nations have in the Charter reaffirmed their faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person and in the equal rights of men and women and have determined to promote social progress and better standards of life in larger freedom,

Whereas Member States have pledged themselves to achieve, in co-operation with the United Nations, the promotion of universal respect for and observance of human rights and fundamental freedoms,

Whereas a common understanding of these rights and freedoms is of the greatest importance for the full realization of this pledge,

Now, Therefore,

THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY
proclaims

THIS UNIVERSAL DECLARATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS as a common standard of achievement for all peoples and all nations, to the end that every individual and every organ of society, keeping this Declaration constantly in mind, shall strive by teaching and education to promote respect for these rights and freedoms and by progressive measures, national and international, to secure their universal and effective recognition and observance, both among the peoples of Member States themselves and among the peoples of territories under their jurisdiction.

Article 1. All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood.

Article 2. Everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms set forth in this Declaration, without distinction of any kind, such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status.

Furthermore, no distinction shall be made on the basis of the political, jurisdictional or international status of the country or territory to which a person belongs, whether it be independent, trust, non-self-governing or under any other limitation of sovereignty.

Article 3. Everyone has the right to life, liberty and security of person.

Article 4. No one shall be held in slavery or servitude; slavery and the slave trade shall be prohibited in all their forms.

Article 5. No one shall be subjected to torture or to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.

Article 6. Everyone has the right to recognition everywhere as a person before the law.

Article 7. All are equal before the law and are entitled without any discrimination to equal protection of the law. All are entitled to equal protection against any discrimination in violation of this Declaration and against any incitement to such discrimination.

Article 8. Everyone has the right to an effective remedy by the competent national tribunals for acts violating the fundamental rights granted him by the constitution or by law.

Article 9. No one shall be subjected to arbitrary arrest, detention or exile.

Article 10. Everyone is entitled in full equality to a fair and public hearing by an independent and impartial tribunal, in the determination of his rights and obligations and of any criminal charge against him.

Article 11. (1) Everyone charged with a penal offence has the right to be presumed innocent until proved guilty according to law in a public trial at which he has had all the guarantees necessary for his defence.

(2) No one shall be held guilty of any penal offence on account of any act or omission which did not constitute a penal offence, under national or international law, at the time when it was committed. Nor shall a heavier penalty be imposed than the one that was applicable at the time the penal offence was committed.

Article 12. No one shall be subjected to arbitrary interference with his privacy, family, home or correspondence, nor to attacks upon his honour and reputation. Everyone has the right to the protection of the law against such interference or attacks.

Article 13. (1) Everyone has the right to freedom of movement and residence within the borders of each state.

(2) Everyone has the right to leave any country, including his own, and to return to his country.

Article 14. (1) Everyone has the right to seek and to enjoy in other countries asylum from persecution.

(2) This right may not be invoked in the case of prosecutions genuinely arising from non-political crimes or from acts contrary to the purposes and principles of the United Nations.

Article 15. (1) Everyone has the right to a nationality.

(2) No one shall be arbitrarily deprived of his nationality nor denied the right to change his nationality.

Article 16. (1) Men and women of full age, without any limitation due to race, nationality or religion, have the right to marry and to found a family. They are entitled to equal rights as to marriage, during marriage and at its dissolution.

(2) Marriage shall be entered into only with the free and full consent of the intending spouses.

(3) The family is the natural and fundamental group unit of society and is entitled to protection by society and the State.

Article 17. (1) Everyone has the right to own property alone as well as in association with others.

(2) No one shall be arbitrarily deprived of his property.

Article 18. Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion; this right includes freedom to change his religion or belief, and freedom, either alone or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest his religion or belief in teaching, practice, worship and observance.

Article 19. Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers.

Article 20. (1) Everyone has the right to freedom of peaceful assembly and association.

(2) No one may be compelled to belong to an association.

Article 21. (1) Everyone has the right to take part in the government of his country, directly or through freely chosen representatives.

(2) Everyone has the right of equal access to public service in his country.

(3) The will of the people shall be the basis of the authority of government; this will shall be expressed in periodic and genuine elections which shall be by universal and equal suffrage and shall be held by secret vote or by equivalent free voting procedures.

Article 22. Everyone, as a member of society, has the right to social security and is entitled to realization, through national effort and international co-operation and in accordance with the organization and resources of each State, of the economic, social and cultural rights indispensable for his dignity and the free development of his personality.

Article 23. (1) Everyone has the right to work, to free choice of employment, to just and favourable conditions of work and to protection against unemployment.

(2) Everyone, without any discrimination, has the right to equal pay for equal work.

(3) Everyone who works has the right to just and favourable remuneration ensuring for himself and his family an existence worthy of human dignity, and supplemented, if necessary, by other means of social protection.

(4) Everyone has the right to form and to join trade unions for the protection of his interest.

Article 24. Everyone has the right to rest and leisure, including reasonable limitation of working hours and periodic holidays with pay.

Article 25. (1) Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and of his family, including food, clothing, housing and medical care and necessary social services, and the right to security in the event of unemployment, sickness, disability, widowhood, old age or other lack of livelihood in circumstances beyond his control.

(2) Motherhood and childhood are entitled to special care and assistance. All children, whether born in or out of wedlock, shall enjoy the same social protection.

Article 26. (1) Everyone has the right to education. Education shall be free, at least in the elementary and fundamental stages. Elementary education shall be compulsory. Technical and professional education shall be made generally available and higher education shall be equally accessible to all on the basis of merit.

(2) Education shall be directed to the full development of the human personality and to the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. It shall promote understanding, tolerance and friendship among all nations, racial or religious groups, and shall further the activities of the United Nations for the maintenance of peace.

(3) Parents have a prior right to choose the kind of education that shall be given to their children.

Article 27. (1) Everyone has the right freely to participate in the cultural life of the community, to enjoy the arts and to share in scientific advancement and its benefits.

(2) Everyone has the right to the protection of the moral and material interests resulting from any scientific, literary or artistic production of which he is the author.

Article 28. Everyone is entitled to a social and international order in which the rights and freedoms set forth in this Declaration can be fully realized.

Article 29. (1) Everyone has duties to the community in which alone the free and full development of his personality is possible.

(2) In the exercise of his rights and freedoms, everyone shall be subject only to such limitations as are determined by law solely for the purpose of securing due recognition and respect for the rights and freedoms of others and of meeting the just requirements of morality, public order and the general welfare in a democratic society.

(3) These rights and freedoms may in no case be exercised contrary to the purposes and principles of the United Nations.

Article 30. Nothing in this Declaration may be interpreted as implying for any State, group or person any right to engage in any activity or to perform any act aimed at the destruction of any of the rights and freedoms set forth herein.

Iran has also signed and ratified the UN International Covenants on Civil and Political Rights, and on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, as well as the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide. In December 1981 the United Nations adopted a Declaration on the Elimination of All Forms of Intolerance and of Discrimination Based on Religion or Belief.

FOREWORD

The 1975 Indonesian invasion of East Timor is one of the most brutal and blatant contraventions of international law since 1945. Although the conquest no longer receives even the little international media cover it once had, the suffering of the East Timorese people remains as bad. Although there were some diplomatic remonstrations against the invasion, all governments have refused to adopt any forceful policy (such as economic sanctions) against Indonesia to coerce its withdrawal from East Timor.

The East Timor invasion was the second Indonesian territorial aggrandizement. It took over West Irian in 1963 and has since retained control over it. Despite the adverse reactions from some Western governments, no government (not even that of the Netherlands) decided that the fate of the West Irianese was worth jeopardizing its relations with Indonesia.

This Report is largely concerned about these two land areas. It commences with a brief overview of their conqueror. As is emphasized in the text, the author does not necessarily recognize Indonesia's claim to the two areas. However, an examination of either or both areas, with particular regard to human rights, would be incomplete without an examination of their wider context – especially the way in which they became 'Indonesian minorities'. The Report uses the term 'areas' rather than 'provinces' (of Indonesia) as a further way in which to avoid the author's implicit acceptance of Indonesian conquest.

Events in both areas (especially East Timor) continue to move rapidly. It is inevitable that some features will be superseded by later developments. There is also the way in which the growing information on recent events enables us to obtain a clearer picture of what happened (again especially in East Timor since 1974). Finally, there are the different interpretations which observers accord the same information. In short, any examination of both areas is bound to elicit different reactions from readers. It is hoped that this study will be of use to people wishing to know more about the tragic events in both areas, as well as providing some insights into Indonesian motivations.

The writer accepted the invitation to do this Report because although he does not necessarily regard the West Irianese and East Timorese as Indonesian 'minorities', their plight conforms to the MRG's programme of work:

> (MRG) selects specific problems on which to focus attention, on the basis of criteria such as the severity of persecution or discrimination to which the victims of group prejudice are being subjected, the extent to which it is possible to obtain reliable information, and the prospect of securing an improvement in the treatment of the people concerned by making known the facts of their situation.

With the lack of mass media coverage to events in West Irian and East Timor, this Report may be of use in securing an improvement in the treatment of the people by making better known the facts of their plight.

The first draft of this Report benefited from the comments made by Ms Carmel Budiardjo, Mr Robin Hanbury-Tenison, Ms Jill Jolliffe, Dr Ruth T. McVey, Professor Derek Roebuck, Ms Julie Southwood, Dr J.G. Taylor. The mistakes which remain are, of course, the writer's.

INTRODUCTION

The cultural diversity of Indonesia is unique. No other country has so rich a spectrum of customs and peoples, each with its own special skills and knowledge of the particular environment in which it lives. The Bugis of southern Sulawesi were sailing and trading between Australia and Madagascar before the Portuguese rounded the Cape of Good Hope. Inshore fishermen visit each of Indonesia's 13,677 islands (by one count) as well as innumerable reefs, lagoons and rivers. Inland, over three hundred ethnic groups, speaking more than two hundred and fifty distinct languages and uncounted dialects, farm and hunt from the snow-capped mountains of Irian to the jungle swamps of Sumatra. Each has adapted, often over thousands of years, to its own particular circumstances and needs. Out of these has grown a colourful and fascinating variety of customs and traditions with their arts and crafts, abilities and techniques. Now, with the sudden influx of western products and ideas, these are all too often being degraded and forgotten as cheap, plastic goods flood in from Singapore and Hong Kong and development projects, which produce quick and short-term results and often leave a wilderness behind, supplant tried and tested systems.[1]

This Report starts with Indonesia itself. To try to sum up in only a few thousand words the history and people of Indonesia is an ambitious task, fraught with risks of accusations that the author is too harsh or too sympathetic to particular persons or ideas, or is being superficial. This overview is necessary in order to put into perspective the other two subjects: East Timor and West Irian[2]. It is particularly important to acquire an appreciation of the extent of Indonesia's complex problems. While this writer has been dissatisfied with policies (especially on human rights) followed by the present Government, he has sympathy for anyone for trying to run Indonesia. This overview will also serve to raise the questions which run through the latter pages of the Report: given Indonesia's present problems, why does it try so hard to retain control over East Timor and West Irian?

Most of the Report deals with two areas claimed to be parts of Indonesia. The word 'claimed' is used because one area (East Timor) was recently annexed by force and only a few countries have recognized that annexation; the United Nations continues to oppose it. Meanwhile in West Irian some of its inhabitants have still not accepted Indonesian control over their affairs. This author has criticized the annexation of East Timor[3] and is unhappy about West Irian's present status. The compilation of this study within the context of an overall examination of Indonesia, does not, therefore, necessarily imply acceptance of Indonesia's claims to be the sole and rightful ruler of these two areas.

This Report has been undertaken because of the continuing crises in East Timor and West Irian, which have tended to be overshadowed by the foreign mass media's concern with Indonesia's various other problems. These two areas constitute Indonesia's greatest current problems with 'minorities'. The Report has been done, then, to shed some light on these two areas, especially because the provinces are the main focal points for violence within Indonesia. The areas are worth studying, however, for reasons other than their conflicts. West Irian constitutes about one-fifth of Indonesia's total land area and so is a considerable part of Indonesia. It is potentially wealthy in terms of natural resources, though whether this wealth will be realized in the next few decades remains uncertain.

Indonesia's determination to acquire both areas says a great deal about its overall approach to maintaining unity and the considerable lengths to which it will go to maintain national unity. The reactions by other nations to Indonesia's policies are also worth studying as indicators of international concern to maintain friendly relations with the turbulent giant, rather than be more concerned about the protection of human rights.

This report covers matters over which there remain many disagreements, not only of interpretation but of fact. Indonesia does not receive the full examination from journalists that it is entitled to receive as a result of its size and potential influence and wealth. Foreign journalists are rarely based in Indonesia (and only then in its capital, Jakarta). Most journalists visit Indonesia as part of a caravan carrying their national leaders visiting Indonesia. Like their leaders, their stay is short and sandwiched usually between visits to other Asian nations. Meanwhile, Indonesia is uncooperative towards foreign journalists, whom it often views as trouble-makers out to damage its international image and ferment dissent within its nation. Academics, too, are viewed with suspicion and are barred from particular islands on which there is violence or something else which the Government wants to remain hidden from the world: West Irian and East Timor are good examples.

While every attempt is made, of course, to be an impartial commentator, Indonesia's affairs tend to generate scholarly disagreements; most notably the 1965 coup which has its own separate schools of thought. Additionally, it is very difficult to generalize about the people within a minority. They may often have only two points in common: their own ethnicity and persecution from without. Nonetheless, the persecution of the people in East Timor and West Irian justifies a study (however incomplete) of their plight in the hope of drawing further international attention to it.

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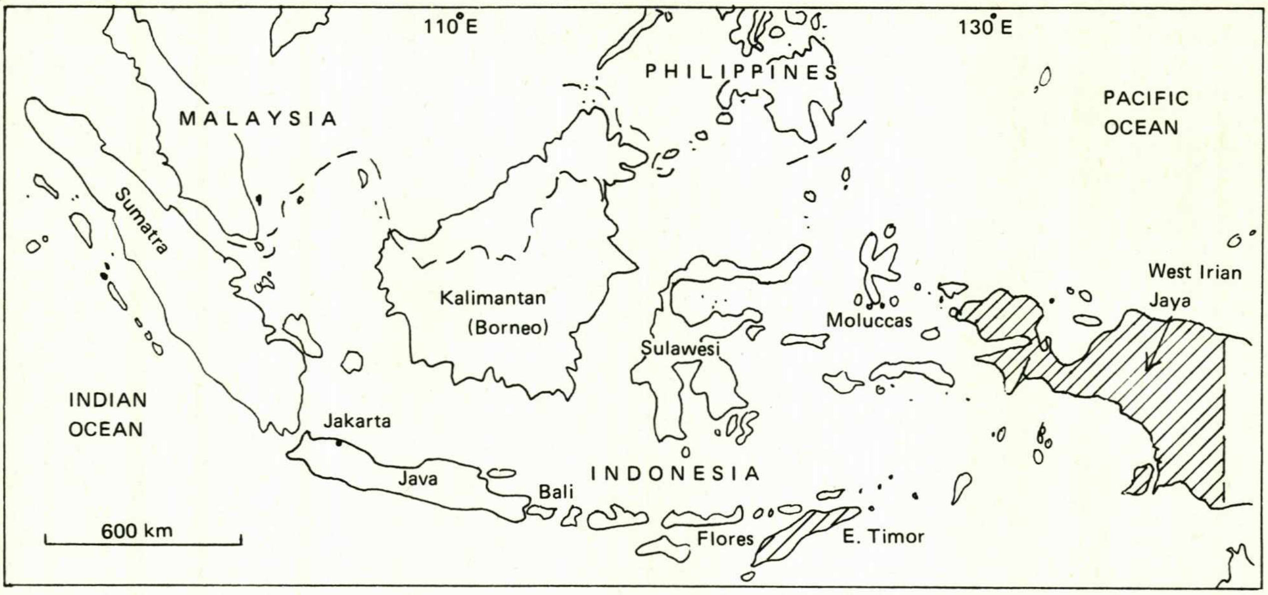
[1] for references see page 19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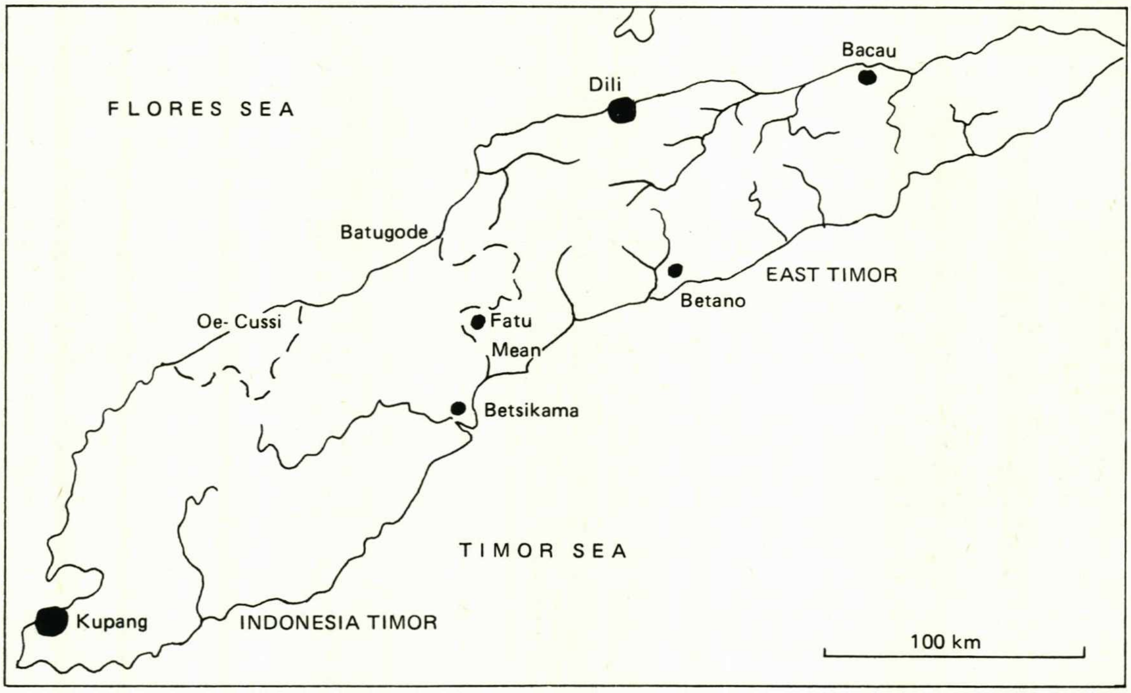
FLORES SEA
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Kupang
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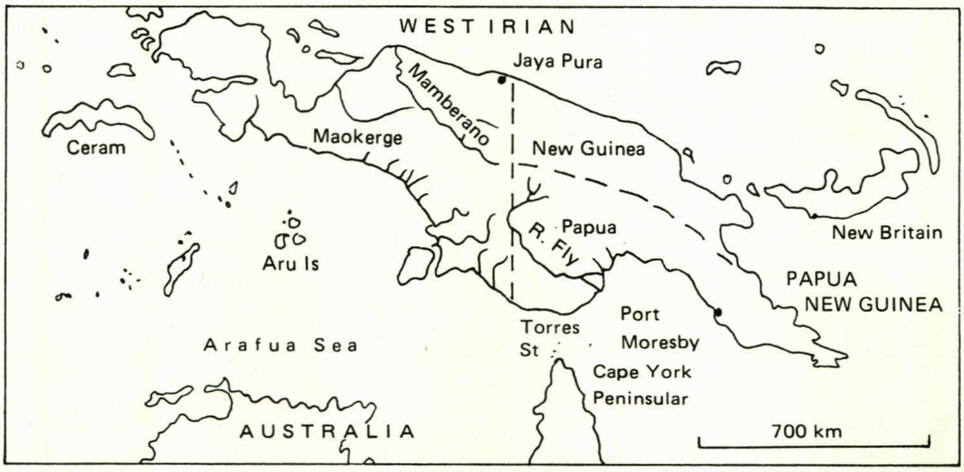
100 km


WEST IRIAN
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Ceram
Maokerge
New Guinea
R. Fly
Papua
New Britain
Aru Is
PAPUA NEW GUINEA
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Port Moresby
Arafua Sea
Cape York Peninsular
AUSTRALIA
700 km

INDONESIA

Indonesia is the crippled giant of south-east Asia. Its potential strength has not been realized and probably will not be by the end of this century. Its post-independence history has been characterized by turbulence: turbulence openly expressed between 1949 and 1965; turbulence unashamedly repressed since 1965 but always threatening to burst open.

Indonesia has, however, suffered upheavals for much of its existence. Its propensity for fragmentation has facilitated its own exploitation; be it by Asian traders centuries ago or multinational corporations today. Its geographical location (astride some of the world's major sea routes) meant that Indonesia would figure in international economics, if not for its own extensive natural resources then simply because it was suitable as a staging post.

Indonesia's national motto is BHINNEKA TUNGGAL IKA which, in English, means Unity in Diversity. Its history and present major policies all have a bearing on or are influenced by the need to maintain national unity.

The minorities which form this Report's case studies are atypical of Indonesia's 'minorities'. On the one hand (as previously noted) their status as 'minorities' within Indonesia is still disputed. On the other hand, Indonesia is a nation of minorities. It just so happens that the present main areas of unrest are West Irian and East Timor. A Report compiled some years hence would doubtless give prominence to other Indonesian minorities. That is the nature of Indonesia's social structure. It seems that there is always at least one minority group at any one time dissatisfied with the rule from Jakarta. This part of the Report recalls briefly how Indonesia has developed into a nation of minorities, which are already the cause of unrest and could themselves later get the attention of a full Report: the Chinese and South Moluccans.

History

> When you read Indonesian history, you read world history. This country is a subtle blending of every culture that ever invaded it – Chinese, Indian, Melanesian, Portuguese, Polynesian, Arabian, English and Dutch. Indonesia's history is a story of wave after wave of migrations of peoples who either absorbed earlier arrivals, killed them off, or pushed them into less favourable regions such as deep forests, high mountains, or remote islands (where they are found to this day). This explains Indonesia's astounding ethnic diversity.[4]

Indonesia used to be a land bridge connecting New Guinea and Australia to the Asian mainland. The land bridge was destroyed by climatic and geological factors and it now forms the world's longest archipelago. Its east-west axis of about 3,200 miles is the equivalent of the distance between London and New York. The north-south axis is about 1,200 miles.

Indonesia's pre-colonial history is still being researched and much remains unknown. Its historical development has been summed up:

> Four basic threads run through the history of the region and go far to explain its intricate ethnic and cultural patterns. Firstly, its location athwart the sea links between the two great Asian culture realms has made Indonesia a frontier for influences stemming from both China and India. Secondly, since prehistoric times the archipelago has experienced a stream of cultural intrusions, each impinging initially only on random locations and each modified in terms of existing patterns to yield an 'Indonesianized' version which spread later to other parts of this island world. Thirdly, a persistent feature of the multitude of islands, large and small, is the sharp contrast between the peoples of the coasts and those of the hilly interiors. Finally, the rivalry for political and commercial supremacy between the centrally located, agriculturally based realms of Java and the trade-oriented thalassocracies astride the Strait of Malacca has provided a continuing theme since the dawn of recorded history.[5]

The early Asian traders not only sought commerce but, in the early centuries AD, Hindu priests accompanying the traders sought converts. The Hindu and Buddhist cultures, especially on Sumatra and Java, were overcome by the spread of Islam from the 14th century onwards. This religion, too, came from traders chasing spice and carrying a new faith. Indonesia remains a major Islamic nation, with about 10% of the world's Muslims, though it also contains some adherents of the earlier faiths.

The next religious overlay was Christianity, brought by the Portuguese. They had difficulty breaking the monopoly held by the traders and priests from China, India and Islamic countries. Instead of trying to supplant existing religious and commercial arrangements, the Portuguese encouraged trade and won converts in other parts of the island world. It is worth noting, then, that each invader up to this time did not create an 'Indonesian' nation as such but was content with having corners of it. While Indonesia is therefore an old nation in terms of its original inhabitants and impact on international economics, it is not old in terms of being a unified political whole.

The Dutch had more success in gaining political and economic control over what is now Indonesia. Much of the Netherlands' 19th century prosperity was derived from the Dutch East Indies. (The old international reputation of the 'Spice Islands" wealth is illustrated by Christopher Columbus' 1492 voyage, in which he located the United States of America, which was motivated by a desire to find a quick route to the 'Spice Islands'.) An incentive to acquire greater physical control (rather than just trading relations) came from the spread of British influence in this region during the 19th century. Indeed, Britain controlled the land around Indonesia, stretching from India in the north-west round in a clockwise arc to the Australian colonies. With fears of invasion from without, the Dutch were even more troubled by colonial revolts. Java was most rebellious, especially in 1825-30 and 1894-9. The revolts continued during the twentieth century, with a major though abortive one in 1926. Some negotiations took place prior to World War II on a form of limited self-government but these did not come to fruition.

The extent of the weak support the Dutch enjoyed among the inhabitants was shown by the relative ease with which the Japanese were able to establish control over the country from December 1941 onwards. Many inhabitants saw the Japanese as liberators which, ironically, they turned out to be since the War marked the end of effective Dutch control. Independence was declared on 17 August 1945 by Indonesian nationalists. The Dutch did not recognize it and made futile if brutal efforts to regain control. The Dutch followed, not for the first time, a policy of divide and rule by encouraging the various components to fight one another. This campaign failed against the Indonesians but, more importantly, created international opposition. The Dutch spent on this campaign the equivalent of its American aid under the Marshall Plan and so the US Government questioned the sense of providing assistance to a nation which spent it only in fighting a colonial war. More significant was the US's anti-colonial stand, which had evolved out of its perceived role of winding up the old European empires and, ironically, its policy of increasing its own influence among developing countries to establish its own form of neo-colonialism. Meanwhile other European imperial nations had their own worries and had little interest in helping the Dutch. The Australian Labour Government was very sympathetic to Indonesian nationalist aspirations. While it is likely that a limited Dutch-Indonesian nationalists war would eventually have gone in favour of the nationalists, the war was not limited and the Dutch lost it more through international political opposition than military defeat.

On 27 December 1949 the Dutch transferred sovereignty to the republic of Indonesia – except for West Irian, which was left temporarily under Dutch control until its future could be decided. Sukarno, founder of the Indonesian Nationalist Party in 1927, and the leading figure in the struggle for independence, was the first president.

Sukarno's turbulent era remains the centre of controversy. He was one of the first of the Third World leaders and an initiator of the Third World bloc in international politics. Sukarno remains an enigmatic figure.[6] He had his own blend of marxism, nationalism, Islam and traditional Javanese concepts. He tried to forge a national identity for his country – though the foreign mass media were more interested in his taste for women. All Third World leaders have difficult tasks, but he had one of the hardest, given the country's fragmented nature, lack of precedents and the economic dislocation caused by colonialism. However, this is not the opportunity to examine his contribution to Indonesia or international relations generally, even less to trace the salient points of his leadership.

Six prominent Indonesian Army generals were killed by junior soldiers, led by Colonel Untung, on the night of 30 September/1 October 1965. The Army retaliated by killing leading members of the Communist Party of Indonesia (PKI), the longest established communist party in Asia. This led to a wave of violence, in which thousands of people were killed – the estimates have varied between 80,000 and one million. The 1965 attempted coup and successful counter-coup remain the subject of controversy. Besides the number of people killed, the major questions are whether Sukarno was involved directly in the coup (as a way of establishing control over the Army) and what role did the PKI play. The present rulers take the view that they saved the nation from communist control. But it has also been argued that the PKI was doing so well with conventional methods that it had no need for violence. This period, one of the most important (if not the most important) in Indonesia's post-independence history remains too complicated to explain briefly to everyone's satisfaction and readers are referred to the literature which it has generated.[7] What is certain is that after 1 October 1965 Sukarno's control waned quickly. Though he had been proclaimed president for life, the new military rulers effectively removed him from power in 1966; he was formally deposed in March 1968 and died in June 1970. Nine years later, on the anniversary of his death, President Suharto dedicated an expensive mausoleum for the late President. This symbolized the resurgence in respect for him.

Sukarno's replacement, President Suharto, came to power on a wave of terror based on mass violations of human rights, especially of those alleged to be communist. Few other nations since 1945 have experienced such a brutal violation of human rights. By shifting his nation into a more overt anti-communist stance, Suharto hoped to obtain foreign aid from governments (especially the US) which were anti-communist, as well as enticing multi-national corporations by promises of cheap, stable labour.

Indonesia Today

> When Suharto and the armed forces ousted Sukarno from power in 1966, brought in a team of Western-educated technocrats to restore order and a degree of Western-style planning to the economy and reopened the country to foreign investment, it amounted to a repudiation of 20 years of Indonesian history. For the first time since Indonesia wrested its independence from the Dutch, the politics of nationalism were no longer in command. Instead, the priorities were economic pragmatism and an accommodation with the Western industrialized powers and especially Japan.
>
> In casting his lot with the major non-communist states, Suharto made a commitment that Sukarno had tried for two decades to avoid. He committed the nation to a dependence on trade and on aid from the major capitalist countries. He saw this as the best strategy to promote rapid economic development at home. But the move went against the dominant political themes in Indonesian history, and as such was a gamble. It opened Suharto's flanks to criticism from nationalists still suspicious of the motives of former imperial powers, to leftists who viewed the concept of liberal democracy as anathema and inherently exploitative, and to radical rightists who felt passionately, for reasons of culture and religion, that the influence of the West, with its secularism and corrupting materialism, must be staunchly resisted.[8]

President Suharto must rank as one of the world's most beleaguered leaders. He has presided over a country which, no matter how chaotic was his legacy, has failed to meet the goals he himself laid down, though the extent of the failure or success is hotly debated.[9] Indonesia remains the crippled giant of south-east Asia.

The initial results, however, were promising (at least on paper). Inflation was reduced (at one point under Sukarno it had gone to 600% per year), GDP increased and exports flourished. The nation's infrastructure was greatly improved, with more schools, roads and hospitals than ever before. To what extent all Indonesians benefited from this economic programme, is difficult to evaluate. The new military elite and the foreign corporations have certainly done well. But it is likely that many people, especially those on the outer islands and in the slums in the cities on the inner islands, have not done well. Java, for example, has only 7% of the total Indonesian land area but has about 60% of the people – of whom, in turn, about 75% are landless. Indeed, Jakarta, on the island of Java, has been likened to Calcutta.[10] This once elegant Dutch city has been submerged under the weight of five million people, an expansion of 1000% in half a century, living in appalling conditions but reluctant to live elsewhere.

An essential component of Suharto's 'New Order' was the importation of western-type economic approaches and goal-setting. (The people responsible have been called the 'Berkeley Mafia', since some of them acquired their social science training at the University of California at Berkeley.) The applicability of such thinking has been questioned, particularly in regard to its ability to supplant impenetrable cultural barriers and, even if this were possible, whether it would, in fact, be to the benefit of the Indonesian people. In short, the Indonesian leadership may have been following the wrong model for development[11] – if its goal was the creation of an equitable society.

This equivocation indicates a second reason for Indonesia's lack of progress: the inherent nature of its military dictatorship. Despite a veneer of western-type liberal democracy, Indonesia's ruling elite has been energetic in its attempts to, in effect, de-politicize the nation. It abhors public dissent. The government, acting on the policy that widespread public political expression could undermine national unity and security, has sought to curtail such expressions, no matter the number of people it puts behind bars. Its power is not absolute. It is under pressure to be more liberal from sections of its population (notably some intellectuals, journalists and students) as well as the US. Its success in restraining the flow of criticisms and suggestions has been manifested in its stale, if not wrong, economic policies. In short, the military dictatorship is mismanaging the country but has sufficient power to prevent an alternative government.

The country's economy floats on oil.[12] This represents over 50% of the Government's income and is the one main cause of the nation's economic growth. But it has also produced considerable problems for the Government, and these illustrate three main collections of problems throughout Indonesia today. First, the main administrative control over oil production was handled by Pertamina, the national oil company. Pertamina was controlled by General Ibnu Sutowo, a close friend of the President. He was given wide discretion over the company's assets. While he may have been a good administrator, he knew little about oil production and the company collapsed in 1975, creating one of the greatest peace time disasters to hit any country in recent years. He over-extended the company into several non-oil activities and this chaotic expansion coincided with fears for Indonesia's inability to repay foreign loans. Pertamina in 1975 had a debt of US$10,000 million – larger than the then annual budget. The company is still paying off the debt (now about US$4,000 million). Second, the oil boom gave plenty of scope for corruption. The extent of this corruption was revealed in 1980, during a Singapore High Court case to resolve competing claims on the estate of former Pertamina official Haji Tahir (who died in 1976). Tahir earned $600 per month but left an estate worth US$32 million. Finally, Indonesia's easily accessible oil will be exhausted by the end of the 1980s. Even before that time, it will present economic problems since the post-1973 oil boom has apparently peaked and although the international price is unlikely to decline, it is equally unlikely to keep rising at the same rate achieved in the 1970s. The nation has no other economic activity with the same potential for boosting the economy. Meanwhile, almost 60% of the people live below the World Bank's official poverty line and there is no way of easing that poverty during the 1980s while the present Government remains in power. Indeed, the picture is, by international standards – having regard to Indonesia's oil wealth – very gloomy. Life expectancy at birth is 48 years; about 60,000 infants less than one year old die annually; over 100 million people do not have access to safe drinking water; almost 30 million people aged 15 or more remain illiterate; daily wages in many parts of Indonesia are less than $1. By the end of the 1980s, then, Indonesians generally – other than those in the ruling elite – will probably look back at the deceased oil boom as a time of lost opportunities to increase the overall economic and social well-being of most people.

Third, the mismanagement is not absolute in the sense that although the majority of people have not benefited from Indonesia's economic growth, the ruling elite certainly has. The inflow of foreign aid, the export of oil and other raw materials, and the use of Indonesia's cheap labour by multinational corporations, have all provided opportunities for corruption. The illicit transfer of such funds to the ruling elite and public servants may be as high as 30% of total Indonesian foreign capital influx. Suharto has responded by initiating various anti-corruption operations, as well as calling for simpler life-styles. Both are fatuous, given the corruption and extravagant life-styles of the ruling elite itself.

Fourth, notwithstanding the recent success of Indonesia's family planning programme introduced in 1967 as a high priority matter (Sukarno himself was an opponent of family planning and so contributed to Suharto's population problems), Indonesia is still faced with a population crisis. It is the fifth most populous country in the world, with a population of about 148 million. The work force is estimated at 50 million. Of these, two million are unemployed and another nine million are underemployed. With an annual population increase of about 2% (assuming that the population programmes continue) at least 1.3 million new jobs are required each year. Although five-year development programmes are introduced (Repelita 3 began in 1979), planning is difficult because of basic internal differences of opinion between those who advocate large-scale capital intensive projects and small-scale labour intensive projects. Indonesia is not the only country, of course, to be faced with this dilemma but as it is one of the world's largest nations and heavily reliant upon Western and UN financial assistance, the implications of failure are much greater than, say, if the Pacific islands defaulted on their loans.

Of the estimated 148 million Indonesians, 90 million live on Java and Bali (the small island immediately to Java's east). These two islands, having a total area of little more than 35% of Japan, have a population which is about 90% that of Japan's. Java, in fact, has a population density rate of 1,442 persons per square mile – one of the world's highest. It is an ironic tragedy that despite all of Indonesia's land, so little of it is cultivated because so many people prefer to live on Java and Bali.

In 1977, Indonesia imported about one-third of the world's internationally traded rice. It is likely to retain its position as one of the world's major rice importers and will pay about 10-15% of its export revenue for it. The 'green revolution' began well (but on a limited scale) in the 1960s, with three crops per year being produced as a result of better rice strains, irrigation and greater use of fertilizer. From the mid-1970s, however, the annual increase in rice production has been only 1%. This has been blamed on bad weather, hard harvest conditions, soil erosion and mutation of the rice strains.

The obvious policy would be, as the Dutch thought, to transfer people from Java and Bali to other Indonesian islands. Transmigration programmes, though ambitious, have not resulted in large shifts in population. The government hopes to transfer 2,500,000 persons in the period 1974-84; only 300,000 were actually transferred in the previous five years. The resistance is motivated by the conservatism of the inhabitants to move away from a situation with which they are already familiar, particularly recalling the Government's record of general mismanagement being a bad omen, and the fear of the unknown future which the Government could be creating for them. Even more important perhaps are the facts that Java and Bali are fertile islands and the alternative islands are neither so fertile nor as suitable for the Javanese and Balinese agricultural methods. Moreover, there is the likelihood that the inhabitants of the other islands would resent their arrival both because of their coming from different parts of Indonesia and because they would be receiving preferential treatment (including possibly the allocation of land previously belonging to the original inhabitants). Finally, their presence in other islands may be viewed by locals as part of the Government's strategy of maintaining national unity by transferring evidently loyal persons to potentially dissident islands as a political counterweight to such aspirations.

Human Rights

One of the Report's main points is the sheer magnitude of Indonesia's various problems (especially the need to maintain national unity and the urgency of economic development) – without acquiring additional problems by taking over West Irian and East Timor. Its human rights record – leaving aside the situations in West Irian and East Timor – is one of the world's worst. The most notorious aspect of that record is its political prisoner policy, which is monitored by such human rights organizations as Amnesty International[13] and the British campaign for the Defence of Political Prisoners and Human Rights in Indonesia.[14] During the late 1970s, the Indonesian Government released some of its prisoners, though it has not relinquished the right to treat harshly its critics. This programme of releasing some prisoners has earned some praise from the US State Department[15] but continuing criticism from other sources.[16]

The majority of political prisoners are held, or have been held, because they are believed to be (rather than having been found guilty of being) members or supporters of the Communist Party. The Party is not itself an ethnic minority nor does it preach island separatism. The issue of political prisoners, no matter how serious and newsworthy, is not a substantive matter for this Report.

The issue does, however, relate to this Report. First, the over-reaction of the Government to the Communist Party cannot now be explained merely as a fear of the 1965 attempted coup (in which the Party may not have been directly involved). Instead, the Government's anti-communist line is a mixture of its own distaste for communism and a bowing to pressure from the conservative Islamic population. Second, the 'communist menace' is a good rallying point for national unity and, like some other governments, it can use the 'menace' both as an explanation for its poor progress (which is blamed partly on the communists) and as a reason for the country to stick together.

The Government's critics are growing in number and audacity. The focal point is not only corruption but the wider aspects of its strategy for economic development. It has argued, in effect, that there is a trade-off between the necessity to restrict civil and political rights, in the interests of achieving economic and social progress. This argument was accepted for several years but it is now wearing thin. Indonesians can see that they are having to endure violations to their civil and political rights but are not receiving compensatory economic and social benefits. Meanwhile, the people who are benefiting are the ruling elite, foreign tourists and transnational corporations. The latter hurt the people both by exploiting the cheap, non-unionized labour, and by investing increasingly in capital-intensive projects which do not require many workers anyway. They are also offended by the urban elite's preference for the more sordid aspects of western living, such as the permissive social mores, fast food and pop music. Overhanging all of these dismal developments is the pervading belief that there is now little hope for the future being any better. By the year 2000 the population will be at least 250 million, with 70% of them living on Java. The Government appears to have little interest in their welfare and is increasingly relying on repression to restrict opposition, rather than seeking the necessary thorough economic overhaul to quell criticism.

It is a reflection of the Government's continued (if not increasing) unpopularity that recent additions to the ranks of political prisoners have been (non-communist) students and militant Muslims. In other words, despite the virtual disappearance of the 'communist menace', the Government still feels sufficiently threatened by other sources of criticism, that it needs to continue what remains, by international standards, one of the worst human rights records in the post-1945 world.

It is beyond the scope of this publication to examine the reasons behind, and the implementation of, this policy of repression. But two points should be made. First, the brutality with which East Timor was invaded and the continued harsh policies in East Timor (and to some extent in West Irian) are not mere aberrations. The military bureaucrats have approached the East Timor question with a history of human rights violations and carried over that brutal approach to the new task to hand.

Second, Indonesia's abysmal human rights record triggers off alarm for the fate of the East Timorese under Indonesian control. One wonders what their future will be like if the Indonesian invasion is successful. Although the conflict has resulted in widespread suffering, 'peace' under Indonesian rule will (on the evidence of Indonesia's other human rights policies) still bring suffering.

Diversity in Unity

The purpose of this section is to examine some of the major domestic trends. With about 90% of its population being Moslems, Indonesia is the world's largest Moslem country. The first theme to be examined is Islam's impact on Indonesia, especially in regard to politics, the Government (which is generally more secular) and the Christians. This is followed by the reactions to the Government's attempt at the rapid western-type modernization of Indonesia's more volatile minorities: the Chinese and the South Moluccans. There is also a final brief mention of Indonesia's newest 'minority': the Indochinese refugees. One of this section's main points is that the Government already has enough problems trying to hold the country together, that it is short-sighted to try also to maintain or gain control over West Irian and East Timor.

The Islamic Impact

The Islamic impact may be seen in three ways: the impact on (1) the vast majority of Indonesians; (2) the more secularly-inclined Government; and (3) the minority of Christians.

The Islamic impact upon the approximately 90% of the people who are considered Moslems, has not been uniform. The impact ranges from devout followers to people who, like many Anglicans in the Church of England in Britain, are Moslem more for statistical purposes than for spiritual guidance and nourishment. The religion has not, then, created a monolithic Moslem nation. The Moslem veneer in political events (with varying depths of Islamic commitment) may be seen in elections.

The 2 May 1977 national election (Indonesia's third since independence) saw the Partai Persatuan Pembangunan, a coalition of Moslem parties, presenting itself to the voters as the nation's conscience. The coalition was engineered by the Government. The coalition campaigned under the election symbol of the Ma'abah (the shrine at the centre of Mecca). The Government was reluctant initially to permit such a blatant Islamic symbol but it backed down when the coalition threatened to boycott the election and so rob it of its legitimacy as an expression of popular opinion. (But the PPP was not allowed to use a religious name.)

The election was a forgone conclusion. The Indonesian House of Representatives has a built-in Government majority. The 'functional groups' (Golongan Karya) is composed of persons representing occupations ('functions') such as doctors, civil servants, lawyers, teachers and trade unionists. This is the Government's own political party which, with representatives of the armed forces appointed by the President, has a clear majority over the other parties. The election resulted in a small drop (about 1%) of its share of the national vote; it obtained 61.8%. The PPP's share increased by 2.5% to 29.6% (the other coalition, consisting of nationalist and Christian parties, obtained 8.6%, a drop of 1.5% since 1971). It is remarkable that after a gap of six years, in which some major events had occurred (such as the Pertamina collapse), the 1977 voting pattern should be so similar to 1971's. The Muslims alleged that some malpractices took place which resulted either in potential voters not receiving their ballot papers or the papers being lost. Also the Government's election rules prohibited the making of negative judgments or taking lightly Government policies.

The Muslim coalition, then, stood no chance of winning but it was able to stop Golkar's election boast that it would get 70% of the votes. A coalition party based on Islam in a country, over 90% of whose population is nominally Moslem, has certain advantages. The many thousands of mosques are not only places of daily worship but are venues for informal discussion. Similarly, there is the Islamic evangelical tradition of preachers going on circuit around mosques, schools and places of work to spread the Word. There are also over 17,000 Islamic schools from primary to tertiary level which are also used for spreading ideas.

The Moslem coalition remains a potent force and probably worries the Government as much as the spectre of communism. Its influence is derived not so much from the two houses of parliament but from its hold over the people whereby the fragile nation could be split by Islamic extremists.[17] The coalition's views are difficult to summarize but broadly they tend to be conservative: against easing up the restrictions against communists, suspicion about the rapid release of communist political prisoners, and opposition to the respect of those human rights which could be said to run contrary to an interpretation of Islam, notably equality for women. While the Government is rightly accused about its holding of political prisoners, it should be noted that there are elements of Indonesian society which take an even harsher line towards them and so the Government is in a difficult situation between organizations like Amnesty International on the one hand and some Islamic politicians on the other.

Even more significant for the Government is the Moslem coalition's popularity derived from the frustration of people (who may not, ironically, necessarily be devout Moslems) who like the PPP's anti-corruption stand and its opposition to the western modernism reflected in the growing wealth of the ruling elite. While it would be unwise to take the Iranian analogy too far, it could be said that the PPP (like the period before and immediately after the Shah's overthrow) is the rallying point for people who are embittered about the ruling elite and are looking for an alternative government.

Islamic hold over Indonesians, while potent, is not as strong as in other Islamic areas.[18] It has had difficulty over the centuries penetrating the even older and persistent beliefs which are either home grown or brought in with the Asian traders. Most members of the Government, from Suharto downwards, are followers of Javanese mysticism and a mixture of Hindu-Buddhism. The Government is concerned to maintain the distinction between Islam as the major national religion, and Islam as the broader political factor which would link Indonesia's foreign policy with the more devout Islamic nations. A good analogy is the Church of England in England, which is the national church but whose daily impact on decision-making is limited, if not non-existent.

The Government's attitude towards Islam is based on a number of motivations. One is simply that the ruling elite finds Islam unpalatable compared with its own faith. Second, the Government sees itself as pragmatic and not bound by overarching ideologies and finds Islam too restrictive, especially in regard to the Government's foreign political and economic policies. Third, the Government is conscious of the need to maintain unity and to avoid damaging its international image with allegations of Moslem extremists (however small in number) embarking on violence to cow Indonesia's non-Moslems, who would include of course both itself and the other religious minority, the Christians.

Indonesia is unique in the region (especially if one adds in the Pacific islands) in having so little Christian influence. The Christian colonizers found the ground already well sown by the other faiths and could not establish a strong grasp on Indonesian minds, which were already permeated with their home grown mysticism, Asian faiths and Islam.

There are approximately 10 million Christians in Indonesia. They belong both to the Roman Catholic faith and various Protestant denominations, such as the Dutch Reformed Church and the Lutherans. The competition among Christian churches for converts has (like elsewhere) often been a deterrent to winning new converts. Additionally Christian churches in European colonies (such as the Pacific Islands) have won converts (if only statistical ones) by being identified with the ruling elite. This did not occur under the Dutch and most post-independence leaders have not been Christian (though some Christians – notably T.B. Simatupang, who became Chief of Staff of the Armed Forces – were active in the nationalist cause).

The uneven geographical spread of Christians reflects the Christian denominations' focal points of attention. North Sumatra is notable for its Christian population; Christians are only minute percentages of the populations on Java, Bali and South Sulawesi. There are signs that Christianity's pace of winning converts is increasing.

Recent confrontations between Moslems and Christians have been rare. The most publicized took place in 1974, when the World Council of Churches (a Protestant grouping of all their major churches) cancelled the proposed 1975 Fifth Assembly due to be held in Indonesia because 'there have been signs that the Assembly unintentionally could create problems for Indonesia and its churches, and specifically for the relations between Christians and Muslims in that country'.[19] It would seem that the lack of confrontation is due to the fragile truce being honoured by all parties, which is followed since no one is anxious for a head-on collision.

This desire to maintain the delicate balance explains the Government's August 1978 restrictions on religious evangelization,[20] in which restrictions have been placed both on winning converts to the major faiths (Islamic and Christian) and on the use of foreign religious funds within Indonesia. However, it may well be that the Government's implementation of the rules will favour the Moslems. The Moslems have always felt threatened by Christian missionary activities (despite the lack of evidence of a mass conversion to Christianity). Since Christian missionaries derive, comparatively speaking, far more material aid from overseas than do Moslems, the imposition of this rule is bound to hinder the former more than the latter. It is also a governmental recognition of the Moslem feelings against western influence in Indonesia.

Western Modernity

The Suharto Government has adopted the ironical policy of building a nationalistic country on a foundation of foreign aid and foreign capital, with many economic decisions being made either by foreigners or by foreign-educated Indonesians. With foreign money have come foreign influence, foreign corporations, foreign durable consumer goods and foreign bribery and corruption (augmenting what was already in effect a thriving national industry). This impact is most obvious on Java, especially Jakarta, and this has been the main site for confrontations. The collapse of Pertamina, leaving the nation even more indebted to foreigners, added to the xenophobia.

The most violent recent manifestation of this xenophobia occurred in January 1974. The Japanese Prime Minister, Mr Tanaka, the target of demonstrations in Thailand, South Korea, Malaysia and Singapore, was greeted in Jakarta with the most violent demonstrations Indonesia had seen since the anti-Sukarno ferment in 1966. (Though much of the violence may have been initiated by military provocateurs.) Japan's prosperity is based on the import of raw materials. This has resulted in Japan now having a larger impact on Asian affairs than it itself would like (given local suspicions of Japanese power[21]), with Asian cities being 'Japanized' in terms of prevailing commercial arrangements and advertising. Moreover, most Asian countries have an adverse balance of trade with Japan, which continues to pile up a trade surplus.

The Government is in a difficult situation. It needs foreign capital, not only for its development but also to repay the debts it has already incurred. But it is in a weak bargaining position since, with the current economic depression, it is selling raw materials in competition with other nations in the region, and there is a tendency to try to undercut one another. Suharto is in the trap of rising expectations: the Javanese can see the affluence around them and compare it with their own squalor. The students, as usual, are in the forefront of anti-Government campaigning. The devaluation of the Indonesian rupiah on 15 November 1978 has been used by them to illustrate their claims that the Government is mismanaging the economy. The conservative Islamic section of the population was dubious from the start about the need to rely upon western techniques.

As long as the army supports the Government (in effect they are the same), then Indonesian stability is assured. But Indonesia's image as a good investment site is now threatened because of the unrest bubbling up under the veneer of army-imposed stability. Also repression will not solve Indonesia's economic problems. Putting people in jail does not increase rice production or create more jobs.

Looking to the longer term, Indonesia, on current showing, has two possible fates. One is of the continued rigidity of the military, using repression as a time-gaining device to try to create economic growth, though its very structure will hinder the attainment of that goal because the military will continue to use corruption, thereby undermining economic growth. In short, the tools of repression, instead of allegedly creating stable conditions for economic growth, will be used to guarantee the safe use of corruption.

Alternatively, the military's rigidity could be weakened (but not abolished) and be replaced by Latin American-type coups and counter-coups. The military will continue to set the pace for the country's development, if only by its prevention of the coming to power of a stable civilian democracy.

Additionally, the current generation of Indonesian military leaders will all leave the political stage during the next decade or so. This adds to the nation's uncertainty since little is being done to groom the next set of leaders (for fear they could try to take over prematurely) and so the nation's future is headed for a very difficult time: the exhaustion of most of the oil wealth and a political vacuum.

It is against this dismal background, that we should now look at some of Indonesia's minority problems.

The Chinese

There are about 3.5 million Chinese people living in Indonesia; representing over a fifth of all the Chinese in south-east Asia. This total has to be treated with caution since recent censuses have not been compiled on the basis of who are the Chinese in the community. Also, some Chinese have intermarried with Indonesians. Meanwhile, there are also Chinese living overseas (mainly China and Hong Kong) who left Indonesia in the early 1960s under the Jakarta/Peking dual nationality agreement but who have not prospered and would like to return. About 100,000 are involved, though here again the figure has to be treated with caution. Given the size of Indonesia and the traffic between the north-east islands and mainland south-east Asia, it is likely that some Chinese in Malaysia/Singapore have returned to Indonesia. The Indonesians have claimed that up to US$1 million is sent each year from Indonesia to the Chinese in China (passing through Hong Kong), thereby illustrating continued Chinese allegiance to their original country.[22]

Indonesian antipathy towards the Chinese is derived from two main sources. First, they are seen as being non-Indonesian and a possible security risk because of their link with the communist Chinese. It would appear that the Chinese Government has not tried to mobilize its overseas Chinese as a way of infiltrating south-east Asian countries, presumably thinking that the chances of a communist revolution in these countries are more dependent upon the inhabitants themselves adopting communism and working for revolution.[23] However, the Indonesian Government, with strong pressure from Moslems, has remained suspicious of its Chinese.

Second, the overseas Chinese are seen throughout Asia as tough, almost immoral, traders, who always beat the local traders in business deals. It is often the case that Chinese businessmen are more experienced, more enterprising and more skilled than their Javanese, Sumatran and Balinese counterparts. However, as with the stereotype of the European Jew, not every Chinaman is an affluent businessman grinding the Indonesians into the ground. But the image continues. The Government has limited some of the Chinese participation in the economy, but in a nation which thrives on corruption such limits are not successful. Indeed, it should be more a matter of harnessing Chinese skill in negotiating better deals for Indonesia with foreign companies – though the conservative Moslems would be suspicious of giving the Chinese such a role.

More overseas Chinese have been killed, in the last 30 years, in Indonesia than in other locations during the same period. Anti-Chinese hostility has been a regular feature of post-independence Indonesia, especially in 1959-63 and 1965-7. New violence took place in later 1980, though not on the same scale as on previous occasions. The violence is now less directed towards alleged Chinese communist sympathies but is more of a reflection of the general antipathy towards this form of alleged foreign economic power. The basis for continuing hostility was laid in the Dutch colonial era, when a clear distinction was made between the Chinese and local Indonesians. The Chinese, many of whom were encouraged to migrate to Indonesia, became the clerical middle class. The Dutch elite gave general oversight to the economy. The Chinese were left to operate as tax collectors and pawnshop owners, and run the opium trade on behalf of Dutch officials. They consolidated their economic power by maintaining close family ties. Chinese involvement in commercial activities was augmented by the Dutch agricultural law of 1870, which stopped the Chinese from owning agricultural land, thereby forcing them to base their economic activities in the cities and towns. Having gained from these developments, dating back in some cases to over a century ago, they have resisted successfully all recent attempts aimed at reducing their power.

It is difficult to see a way out of this problem. The Chinese, though some intermarry, often prefer their own company and remain aloof from the poorer Indonesians. Though the Government could work harder to get the 800,000 Chinese who do not have Indonesian citizenship to acquire it, Chinese family and ethnic links would still exist outside Indonesia and they would continue to send money out of the country. There are also another 300,000 Chinese who are inclined towards Taiwan, which the Government does not recognize, and who are in effect stateless since they are neither Indonesian nor Chinese. Meanwhile all Chinese, whether of Indonesian citizenship or Chinese or Taiwanese, make a significant contribution to the economy and so it would be damaging to expel them – if a country could be found to have them. On the other hand, the Government is always aware of Moslem hostility towards them and has to tread carefully.

The South Moluccans

If the Chinese constitute Indonesia's most long-running minority problem, the South Moluccans constitute its most publicized one. The publicity has been derived from the South Moluccan community in the Netherlands. While all the recent violence has taken place in Europe, the problem is essentially Indonesia's.

The South Moluccan homeland consists of some 150 small islands in the eastern part of the Indonesian archipelago. The islands have a population of about one million persons. Originally colonized by Portugal in 1512, they were taken over by the Netherlands in the 1600s and incorporated into the Dutch East Indies. The islands were a useful source of nutmeg, cloves and other spices.

The Dutch made special efforts to convert the people to Christianity and pressed them into service in the colonial army. They served as the Gurkha equivalent in the Dutch empire, with the motto 'Loyal through Centuries'. They were the most receptive of all the East Indies to Dutch influence. They earned a notorious reputation for committing atrocities in the vain battle to defeat the post-World War II nationalist independence movement. In the Round Table Conference, the Netherlands sought some measure of local autonomy for the South Moluccans but the final agreement did not provide for complete independence. It did, however, guarantee some measure of autonomy but this was ignored by the new Indonesian Government and when the Republik Maluku Selatan (RMS) was declared on 25 April 1950 it was forcibly suppressed by the Government. The Dutch could do nothing about this except for lodging a note of protest. There has remained a good deal of public sympathy in the Netherlands towards the South Moluccans. For the moment, anyway, the South Moluccan islands remain comparatively tranquil – though predictions of Indonesian stability are always risky.

The instability comes, instead, from the 40,000 persons in the Moluccan community resident in the Netherlands. The core of this community consists of the servicemen and their families who arrived in 1951, having realized that life in the new Indonesia would be difficult. 4,000 Moluccan members of the Royal Netherlands Indies Army (KNIL) were on Java at the time of the unilateral declaration of the South Moluccan Republic. Their role in the anti-nationalist struggle, plus the fighting in the South Moluccan islands between the RMS and Government forces, precluded their demobilization in the South Moluccas. The Dutch transferred them to the Netherlands. The KNIL members believed this to be a temporary measure, pending the successful independence of their homeland.

They, and their families, have become in effect the Palestinians of the Far East. They have voluntarily refused integration into the Dutch society and have tended to form a closely-knit community, with organizations fostering a sense of commitment to the ideal of an independent Moluccan republic. They claim their Protestant faith and Negroid ethnicity set them apart from other Indonesian islands. It took over a decade for the Indonesian Government to quell all the independence supporters within the South Moluccas, and doubtless these exiles spent many years expecting the fragile nation to collapse, thereby ensuring their journey home.

By the late 1960s, it was clear that the Government was in firm control of the South Moluccas. This realization, coinciding with Palestinian guerilla violence and impatience among the younger members of the exiled community, all indicated the need to take matters into their own hands. Dutch authorities first became aware of this potential for violence in 1970 when, on the eve of the first state visit to Holland by the Indonesian President, a group staged a Palestinian-type commando raid on the Indonesian Ambassador's residence in The Hague. He escaped but his family spent 24 hours as hostages and a Dutch policeman was shot dead. In spring 1974, the Amsterdam office of the Indonesian airline was set on fire. Later that year they did damage of about US$200,000 to the Peace Palace in The Hague, which houses the International Court of Justice, as a counter-activity to the anniversary celebrations of Indonesian independence.

The violence has since continued, with hi-jackings being a favoured technique. The Dutch Government, learning from other west European countries, has taken a tough line and used sophisticated counter-measures to defeat the guerrillas. Although many members of the Dutch Moluccan community support the motives of the guerrillas, it is fair to assume that they are not supporters of their methods. The Dutch Government shows no sign of giving in to their demands.

More to the point, there is little that the Netherlands can do to effect their political demands. In August 1975, the Netherlands and Indonesia agreed on a programme of repatriation. It is believed that about 4,000 South Moluccans have indicated their willingness to return to the South Moluccas as Indonesian citizens. It remains unclear, however, just how many have returned and to what extent the vast majority will ever accept the idea of going back on Indonesia's terms.

Indonesia's position is clear: the South Moluccas are a part of Indonesia and will remain in its post-1950 status. It will not get any special treatment as regards autonomy. The Government has little choice in this matter. First, the South Moluccans have still a bad reputation in Indonesia and a backdown by the Government would annoy the Moslems and others who fought the KNIL for independence. Second, the South Moluccan islands are only 100 miles from West Irian. A backdown here would have severe implications for Indonesian unity: it would inspire the West Irian separatists to greater efforts and it would leave a gap in the chain of islands between West Irian and the rest of Indonesia. Finally, it would show that violence pays – and the Government has spent three decades using force, money and friendly persuasion to convince the Indonesian islands that violence will not ensure greater autonomy or independence because the Government is determined not to allow the fragmentation of Indonesia.

Finally, brief mention should be made of the Indochinese refugees, some 60,000 of whom have arrived in Indonesia.[24] The Indonesian Government (like all the others in South East Asia) has been reluctant to accept them but the 'boat people' have arrived and are difficult to transfer in large numbers to other nations. The situation has been eased by there not being a continued mass exodus, as was feared in the late 1970s. Comparatively few tensions have been created by their presence and Indonesian authorities believe that they can control them. Although they are yet another Indonesian minority, they are likely to cause far fewer problems than most of the others.

WEST IRIAN

Introduction

> In the beginning the white men came slowly. The first Portuguese and Spanish navigators simply skirted the island, roughly charting its outline. They were followed by the Dutch, British and French. The contacts were brief, occasionally bloody. Only the edges of the great island were touched. Holland made the first great impact on the island's history by simply drawing a line down a shadowy map. In 1848 Holland proclaimed the area west of 141 degrees east to be Dutch territory. This action, like others that were to follow, was done without concern for, consultation with, or even the knowledge of the people concerned. It was done to secure the south-eastern approaches to Holland's flourishing empire in the East Indies. But by that act a million people were to pass out of the history of Melanesian New Guinea and into the history of Indonesia.[25]

West Irian is the easternmost part of Indonesia. The island of New Guinea is the world's second largest island. It remains one of the least explored places on earth.[26]

The eastern half of the island consists of the newly independent nation of Papua New Guinea. The Dutch claim of 1848 did little to stimulate the other major colonial power in the area, Britain, to claim the other half. Early attempts to explore the eastern half were hindered by the British Colonial Office's lack of support. This may be seen in the quick demise of the New Guinea Company formed in 1867. The British attitude was that, notwithstanding the island's reputed potential wealth because of natural resources, the Government already had enough territories elsewhere to manage. Britain did not want to assume control over a potentially hostile population, about whose number and ways of life not very much was known.[27] Also, the Government was suspicious that the Queensland colonial Government wanted British control over the territory as another source of cheap, black labour.[28]

Fear of possible German annexation of northern New Guinea prompted the Queensland Premier, Sir Thomas McIlwraith in 1883 to order the claiming of southern New Guinea as a British Crown possession. This was unacceptable to London, which demanded an explanation for his actions. His answer came in the form of a convention of Australian states, New Zealand and Fiji. It met November-December 1883 and demanded that no foreign power be permitted to annex territory south of the Equator; it called upon Britain to annex New Guinea (that is, the south-eastern part of the island); and above all it pledged the Australians to help finance the cost of running the colony. This was the first occasion on which a representative body of responsible Australian politicians pledged their countrymen to undertake a national obligation.[29] The convention was a significant move towards Australian federation and effective independence (1901) and decreed the absorption of Papua into the British Empire. The new nation of Australia took over the running of Papua as one of its first tasks. It took over New Guinea (the German-controlled north-eastern part) in World War I and, in a spirited campaign during the negotiations on the creation of the League of Nations, it forced President Woodrow Wilson to accept (despite one of his 'Fourteen Points' about 'no annexation') Australian annexation of the colony.[30]

Australia's record in the Territory of Papua New Guinea (TPNG) was one of benign neglect. Its determination to be there was derived primarily to keep out others, rather than to develop it economically, let alone maintain the high standards laid down in the League of Nations Covenant. The World War II Japanese invasion of TPNG convinced Australia of its need to maintain this barrier and to hold out for as long as possible, despite the prevailing anti-colonial atmosphere after 1945 in the UN and elsewhere.

Gough Whitlam's Labor Government (1972-5) gave independence to TPNG on 16 September 1975. Despite allegations from conservative politicians that the independence (however correct in principle) was too hurried and alarmist accounts in the mass media (which are eagerly awaiting another Congo-type civil war), Papua New Guinea has not dissolved into tribal warfare, extermination of the whites or the nationalization of foreign assets. On the contrary, it has had one of the smoothest passages into nationhood ever enjoyed by a post-1945 independent colony.[31]

West Irian now constitutes Papua New Guinea's major foreign problem. It shows no sign of early resolution, though recent developments (to be recounted later) have tended to lower the political temperature. If, on the other hand, the West Irian situation hots up, then not only will Papua New Guinea have its first foreign policy crisis, but Australia will also be dragged back into the island's affairs.

West Irian before 1963

Primitive inhabitants, immense swamps, and a deadly climate combined to provide a protective wall around New Guinea which long thwarted intervention and even exploration. Its location in a backwater at the far end of both the Indian and Pacific Oceans meant that such early contacts as were established, mainly by the corsairs and traders of the various islands in the Moluccas, were restricted to small and isolated pockets along the fringe of western New Guinea.

European explorers sometimes sailed along New Guinea's coasts but their occasional acts of annexation were not taken up by their respective governments. Of the European powers, only the Dutch maintained a long, albeit haphazard, interest because of their monopoly of the spice trade in the neighbouring Moluccas. They were satisfied, however, to view New Guinea as a convenient buffer against foreign interests and to recognize the supposed claims of their protectorate of Tidore to some of the coastal islands off the western tip.[32]

The island of New Guinea, both east and west, has the rare status of being colonized by European nations whose enthusiasm for additional colonies was on the wane and whose control was haphazard, if not reluctant. Only the Germans were enthusiastic and this was due to their comparatively late start in the race for empire which had resulted in there being little land left for colonization. It is reasonable to assume (given Germany's lack of participation in its new colony) that had Germany started the race for empire earlier and acquired African or other Asian colonies, its interest in north-eastern New Guinea would also have been minimal.

West Irian was part of the Dutch East Indies. However it is geologically and geographically more closely related to Australasia than Indochina. Much the same could be said of its vegetation. The people, too, have different ethnic background, languages and religion (which is not predominantly Muslim or Christian but animistic, with worship of the spirits which the people believe to inherit their surrounding world).[33] Its eventual inclusion in Indonesia, then, was due more to political factors rather than cultural ones – without even reference to the people themselves being permitted to explain their own point of view.

West Irian was part of the territory of the Sultanate of Tidore (in the Moluccas). The Dutch did not, however, devote the same attention to it as other parts of the East Indies. It was a convenient waste land. There was limited Dutch penetration beyond the coastal towns and at no time did Dutch control extend to all the colony's inhabitants. Its main purpose, besides being a market for the eastern end of the Dutch Empire, was a site, at Boven Digoel, for a notorious internment camp (which once held some major Indonesian nationalist leaders).

During the 1945 discussions among the nationalists as to the future boundaries for the independent nation whose existence they were soon to declare, there was some disagreement over West Irian's inclusion within the new nation. One view was that the new nation should try to conform to some measure of cultural similarity. This would have excluded West Irian but, ironically, for the sake of consistency would have implied the absorption of parts of Malaya. Another view (held by Sukarno) was that the new nation should simply be created from the entire Dutch colony. This view (which prevailed) required continued inclusion of West Irian in the new nation.

The Netherlands opposed West Irian's inclusion in Indonesia for a number of reasons. It thought that West Irian was potentially rich in raw materials. It thought (wrongly) that it would need an Asian area for persons not wishing to live in Indonesia and not willing or not able to go to the Netherlands. There was also a need to placate domestic Dutch opposition to granting independence to Indonesia by retaining, in effect, a separate Dutch colony.

In the Round Table negotiations at The Hague which led to Indonesian independence, it was agreed that West Irian's fate would be decided later. After 1949, the Dutch undertook for the only time in their control of the territory, a programme of economic development, with the main impact being felt in the coastal areas. Besides being motivated by its original ideas, the Netherlands hoped to show that the land could prosper far more than the rest of its former colony. It doubtless looked to the eventual conversion of the colony to an independent, flourishing pro-Dutch nation. Faced with the growing realization that West Irian's economic potential was going to take longer to come to fruition (if ever) the Netherlands nonetheless found itself unable to back down to Indonesian pressure to transfer it to Indonesia. The Netherlands was faced with domestic Dutch opposition to such an act. And so it tried to hold out. It followed a policy which was inadequate but which was politically less damaging than surrender to Indonesia. It was not motivated by a desire to follow the wishes of the West Irian people, who were not consulted formally about their fate. Indeed some Indonesian-speaking persons on the coastal areas were advocating absorption into Indonesia. The Dutch were not interested in their opinions. Deeper in West Irian, which had little benefit from Dutch economic policies, people were probably unaware of the whole issue.

All this was taking place at a time when all the other imperial powers in western Europe (except Portugal) were divesting themselves of colonies. Being so isolated from Holland and separated from it by Indonesia itself and half the globe, West Irian could not expect much military assistance in the event of an Indonesian invasion. Moreover, the continued Dutch control gave the Sukarno Government an excuse to acquire Dutch property in Indonesia and expel Dutch citizens. Indonesia did mount some military operations but they were ineffective. Indeed some Indonesian personnel were handed upon capture to the Dutch by the people whom they had come to liberate. The Dutch lost, however, the larger political war, especially in the UN. The Dutch were caught in a pincer: the growing Third World bloc naturally opposed Dutch rule and sided with Indonesia, then one of the bloc's leaders; while the United States wanted to remain on good terms with Indonesia and so did not help Holland. Australia was the only major nation to support the Dutch and this was due to Australian fears of the implications for TPNG which Australia wanted to control indefinitely.[34]

To save Dutch prestige, West Irian was handed over, not directly to Indonesia, but in October 1962 to the UN. The UN in turn handed it over to Indonesia on 1 May 1963, on the understanding that there would be a plebiscite in 1969 to test West Irian opinion. The 1969 Act of Free Choice was a farce.[35] There was no plebiscite as such but a sample of pro-Indonesian opinion drawn from tribal leaders. By this time, Sukarno was out of power and Indonesia was run by pro-western generals. Australia, though still unhappy about the Act's implications for the eastern half of the island, decided to turn a blind eye to the Act, rather than campaign at the UN against it (which would have been a forlorn act given the prevailing opinion).[36] The UN General Assembly 'took note' of the outcome (rather than 'endorsed' it as some writers have claimed) in November 1969 in Resolution 2504 (XXIV), adopted with 30 abstentions and no negative votes.[37]

Writing before the UN vote, one writer suggested that:

> It may be better for the UN Mission to withdraw rather than to sanction the illegal procedure. Such an act would also gain for the UN as a whole the reward of Papuan gratitude. Otherwise an extremely dangerous precedent may be created by the UN in becoming an accessory to the denial of freedom and persecution of a nation which has the same right to independence as all those freed under the law (sic) of the UN Declaration on Decolonization.[38]

The UN's credibility, in fact, has not suffered in the way predicted a decade ago; though this is little cause for joy. The UN's participation in the handover and later Act of Free Choice was soon overshadowed by the UN's lack of success in settling other international crises, such as southern Africa and the Middle East. Also, continued Indonesian control suited the political interests both of Indonesia's allies in the Third World and those nations which were courting Indonesia's friendship, notably those in the west. Finally, Indonesia has kept West Irian isolated from the world's political stage so that there have been few persons or organizations which have become interested in its fate, let alone been willing to champion its cause.

West Irian – A Description

New Guinea is the largest island in the world after Greenland. Approximately half the land, and between a quarter and a third of the total population (estimated at three and a half million), now belong to Indonesia. In this area is Carstensz Top mountain, at over five thousand metres (16,500 feet) not only the highest peak on the island, but in the whole of south-east Asia and Australasia. It lies in a region of inaccessible highland valleys stretching for most of the length of the island and inhabited by a rich variety of tribes with many of which contact has only been established in recent years. Around the coasts are extensive areas of lowland forest and swamp in the south, often tidal over wide areas, densely overgrown and difficult to penetrate. Much of the rich plant life is still uncatalogued, there are over one hundred species of mammals, almost all marsupial and in some districts the indigenous population remain isolated and continue to practise cannibalism. Where the people came from, and when their migration took place, is unknown, but in spite of an immediate superficial resemblance to Africans, with their black skins, woolly hair and broad noses, any close relationship has now been disproved, while their affinity with Australian aborigines is only tenuous. The diversity of languages, of which nearly one thousand have been identified, in this the world's most complex linguistic region, as well as of physical and cultural variations, is bewildering but, with the exception of a few pygmy negrito groups, the vast majority of the population are fundamentally similar and classified as Papuans.[39]

West Irian has been inhabited for around 30,000 years (though accuracy is impossible). The inhabitants have retained many of their early forms of living. They are scattered throughout the whole territory in small clans and are kept apart by terrain, language and customs. No native language has more than 150,000 speakers and some are spoken by only a few thousand. The people live mainly by subsistence farming. Little surplus food is produced because of the considerable costs of transporting it to other markets.

There are about 10,000-15,000 Indonesians as well as European missionaries and mineral explorers and some Asian traders. Most of these people live in the coastal towns. The capital city, also on the coast, is Jayapura, with a population of about 30,000. This rundown ex-colonial town is largely operated by Indonesians and Asians, with Irianese taking mainly only menial positions. The city has not suffered from the urban explosion which has adversely affected other cities in developing countries, not least Jakarta. Since personal advancement (in western terms) is usually dependent upon urban living and education, the Irianese outside Jayapura and the other towns, stand little chance of advancement. Those already in the towns are not put in positions of authority because Jakarta does not trust them. Indeed, the Indonesians have a highly racist view of West Irians, who are considered inferior to other Indonesians – except, of course, those who turn away from their own culture and identify far more with Indonesian culture, modes of behaviour and language. Few have made the transition. The most articulate minority who once advocated absorption into Indonesia lost their appetite for Indonesian rule once they began to realise the full cost of Indonesian rule. They had swopped, in effect, one colonizer for another. Additionally, the Indonesian military and other officials enjoy considerable wealth in West Irian (compared with the local people) and are determined not to share it with the West Irian people.

The main agents for social change (such as it is) are Christian missionaries. They may not be winning many converts but they do at least provide basic social functions. There are about 200 missionaries – making West Irian one of the world's most important areas of missionary activity. In general terms, the Protestants are active in building hospitals and clinics, while the Roman Catholics tend to concentrate on agricultural projects and schooling. Their work is not without its problems, especially those created by the more fundamentalist Protestant missionaries. In early 1975, for example, tribespeople killed and ate 13 local assistants of a mission when the European missionary went on leave.[40] Unlike the mainline Protestant and Roman missionaries, these people are too harsh on local customs and too eager to impose their doctrinaire views on the inhabitants. This problem should not detract from the fact that most missionaries are doing work which the Government has been slow to carry out. Their aircraft services, for instance, are a very important source of transport both within West Irian and between West Irian and other areas, and they are well liked by the inhabitants (if only for the services they provide, rather than the Word which they preach). It remains to be seen how their work will be affected by the 1978 limitations on Christian activities.

Islam, by contrast, has made very little impression. West Irian is not a major area for conversion because of Indonesians' racist views of the peoples as being evidently unsuitable potential Moslems. There is also a great cultural divergence between West Irian and Islamic teaching, such as the significance of the pig which runs contrary to Islam. Also, it is likely that the people would not subscribe to a faith which is closely identified with a ruling culture which they themselves (if they are aware of it) abhor.

Although the area itself is inhospitable, it may be wealthy in terms of copper, nickel, oil and timber. As the Dutch found, its rugged terrain prevents a quick return on investment. However, with the world entering a prolonged period of shortages in raw materials, it may eventually be profitable to exploit the materials since the increased market prices will compensate for the initial considerable capital outlay. Also, given the area's startling beauty, there is a tourist potential (tourism being one of the world's major growth industries). But this will not be realized as long as there is violence.

Finally, mention should be made of the particular case of the Dani people. This case is not necessarily representative of all the confrontations between Indonesian and West Irian tribes but it is one of the most well known. In 1971, the Indonesian Government launched Operation Koteka, a programme to 'civilize' the Dani people. The programme sought, in effect, to turn them into good Indonesian citizens. They were encouraged to cease wearing traditional clothing (such as it is) and to wear more modest clothing, to eat rice and less pork, and to speak the national language. When Mr Hanbury-Tenison visited the people two years later,[41] the campaign had collapsed. The Dani still covered themselves with pig fat to keep out the cold, women still cut off a finger or two each time a husband or child died, and men still devoted time to stealing wives, pigs or just fighting. More recently, the Government has decided to drop the campaign entirely. The Dani tribe won. But only after great suffering and persecution. While the Dani practices (illustrated above) have a colourful attractiveness, it would be wrong to take a patronizing or romantic approach to what has been a violent episode in recent West Irian history. The tribe reacted against 'Indonesianization' not merely to perpetuate the practices previously noted but because it represented a fundamental threat to their way of life. The practices were the tip of a cultural iceberg and the tribe recognized the full implications of Indonesia's attempts to 'civilize' it.

Indonesia's main motivation was that it saw the Dani tribe (part of what it already regarded as a racially inferior population) as being particularly contrary to the image it wishes to convey to the world: that of a modern and rapidly developing nation. The isolated tribes (of which the Dani is the most famous as a result of foreign writers) undermined that image to such an extent that it regarded it as sufficient to warrant a determined effort to stop it.

Finally, it is worth recalling that in a wider sense the Dani tribe's suffering and eventual victory manifest the continuing significance of events which took many decades before the present tribespeople were born. West Irian's status as part of Indonesia is due to an accident of history – the Dutch got in first and the Dutch connection provided the bridge over which the Indonesian Government travelled to gain control over West Irian. If Britain had acted more quickly, then West Irian would today either be an independent nation or part of a larger Papua New Guinea. Such are the vagaries of the European colonization of the world.

West Irian in Rebellion

When the Dutch occupation of West New Guinea ended and control passed to the Indonesian state in 1963, it was commonly believed that over a time, the West Papuan population would come to identify with the Indonesian Republic. This simply did not happen. Their desire to run their own affairs and to seek social change within the terms of their own cultures – characteristically expressed during Dutch colonial days in millenarian form and on occasion in acts of physical rebellion – has strengthened. For fourteen years a struggle has been carried on against Indonesian state control.[42]

The rebellion is notable more for its longevity than its level or intensity of fighting. The 'national liberation movement' is the Organisasi Papua Mederka (OPM), the Free Papua Movement, formed in 1963. Its roots go back to the terminal stages of Dutch rule when, in the 1930s and 1940s, some sporadic acts of violence took place in a move to achieve independence. It was initially pro-Indonesian but (as noted above) Indonesian racist attitudes helped turn pro-Indonesian West Irian people into anti-Indonesian people. More generally during the time of Dutch rule, it is now impossible to assess how much anti-imperialist fervour existed among the scattered and isolated inhabitants, most of whom may have been unaware of their being ruled from the Netherlands.

Much of the same could be said of the initial period of Indonesian control. After all if the population had been set against Indonesian rule, it would have fought against West Irian incorporation. Nonetheless this is still no guarantee of a good foundation upon which to expand Indonesian control – a lack of fervent nationalism is hardly the same as a desire for Indonesian citizenship. If the Indonesian Government had adopted the Dutch policy of benign neglect, then it is possible that the OPM would not have strayed outside the area in which it was created, the Numfur-Biak area. However, the Government opted for an Indonesianization programme, which stimulated resentment against Jakarta. The programme has been unsuccessful, if not counterproductive.

However, the Government was in a difficult situation. The Sukarno Government had made the acquisition of West Irian one of the major components of its foreign policy and was determined to hold on to it. The Suharto Government has been obliged to maintain that policy since, notwithstanding Sukarno's faults, it would appear that many influential Indonesians liked it. The Indonesianization programme is a logical progression since this territory, which previously had had little connection with Jakarta, had to be converted into a part of Indonesia. Additionally, the late 1960s saw a slow trend within the Australian Government towards granting independence to Papue New Guinea; a trend which was greatly accelerated and completed under the Whitlam Government. This trend worried Jakarta. If the alarmist predictions came to pass and Papua New Guinea did become another Congo in being torn apart by civil war, then some of the violence could spill over the border into West Irian, thereby encouraging West Irian dissidence. On the other hand, if Papua New Guinea proved to be a success story in decolonization, then it could outpace economic development in West Irian and stimulate unrest among the nation's poorer neighbours, who could have blamed their comparative poverty on Jakarta and could have seen their salvation in terms either of complete independence or in federation with Papua New Guinea. Either prediction was gloomy; so far, the latter seems the more accurate. Finally, the Indonesian Government may have been worried about UN criticism of its lack of commitment towards the people whom it had claimed in 1969 would benefit from its rule and who were wanting its rule.

Jakarta believed that the way to avoid further discontent was to accelerate the rate of economic development. The Government put a disproportionate share of its development funds into West Irian. Although West Irian is the least populated area of Indonesia, it has received the highest per capita assistance of any of the provinces. The result has been yet another source of trouble. The urban-based West Irianese are now undergoing a period of rising expectations. They can see the other people in the towns growing rich and compare their wealth with their own comparative poverty. For despite the investment and consequent economic progress (compared with West Irian's previous lack of economic development) the average West Irian has derived little benefit from the progress. The Government has not acted out of a desire to quell West Irian anti-Indonesian feeling by buying loyalty. On the contrary, it wants to maintain control over West Irian by expanding the Indonesian urban settlement. West Irian's economic potential is at last being realized. But this is not so much for the benefit of the people but to expand Jakarta's wealth and that of multinational corporations.

Recent Developments

> West Irian does not dominate PNG and it never will. PNG would have reason to be concerned if there were an Indonesian movement to incorporate her in Indonesia, or if there were a West Irianese movement to tie PNG to West Irian and rule the two from there, but such movements do not exist and are not in sight, any more than the reverse. And after independence, border movement problems should be solvable by normal diplomatic procedures.[43]

That comforting prediction was made in June 1972. The border situation has changed considerably since then. Indeed, the entire West Irian situation has not been as tranquil as the speaker implied. Since Indonesia remains reluctant to have foreign discussion of the internal West Irian situation, much of West Irian's affairs now have to be viewed from the perspective of its closest neighbour, Papua New Guinea.

All guerrilla wars are difficult to assess. The West Irian one is taking place, moreover, in one of the world's most isolated regions, amid one of the world's most rugged terrains. It is also taking place generally away from the coastal areas so that one gets, not for the first time in areas of guerrilla warfare, two nations: one free from violence and the other suffering from violent incidents.

Peter Hastings, one of Australia's most experienced (if rather conservative) journalists covering the Asian scene, visited West Irian in late 1978 and filed stories of some promising economic progress. He told of the benefits coming from the comparatively high Indonesian investment, of a new spirit of optimism, and even the new taste for rice, though he did note that the OPM was still in existence.[44] The latter fact is, of course, to be expected since Indonesia's economic policies are not aimed at benefiting the West Irian people.

Indeed, the late 1970s have also seen continued guerrilla operations though the accounts and allegations are difficult to verify. Here are a few examples. In the period January 1976 to April 1978, 3,515 Indonesian soldiers and 5,269 Irianese villagers and guerrillas were killed, so the OPM claimed.[45] In September 1977 the OPM claimed to have shot down an Indonesian military DC3 aircraft.[46] In mid-1978, OPM guerrillas captured senior and junior Indonesian armed personnel and tried to use them as a lever for the convening of an international conference (to include Australia and Papua New Guinea) to negotiate their claims for independence; the hostages were later released by their captors.[47] Both 1977 and 1978 were marked by OPM claims to have damaged Indonesia's development programmes by sabotaging industrial plant.[48]

Meanwhile, there have been various movements by West Irianese refugees into Papua New Guinea. They have brought allegations of Indonesian brutality. The number involved is disputed but must run into the thousands.[49] The OPM is also using the country as a staging post for cross-border raids into West Irian to harass Indonesian forces and these raids have resulted in Indonesian attacks on alleged OPM bases in Papua New Guinea,[50] which have in turn stimulated official complaints from Port Moresby Government.[51] To make matters worse, there have been allegations that the Government's forces have helped the OPM, especially in regard to supplying arms.[52] The Government is in a difficult position because few of its citizens like Indonesia enough to support their Government in taking military steps to curb the OPM on its border – even if it had the forces (which it does not[53]) but they do not want to be dragged into a military confrontation with Indonesia over the plight of West Irian by overtly helping the OPM.

Australia, too, is in a dilemma. It remains heavily committed to Papua New Guinea economically (about a third of the national budget comes from official Australian aid) and some Australians remain in the country. With the Vietnam nightmare still potent in Australian politics, voters would not support Australian military intervention in Papua New Guinea, and certainly not help Indonesia, which has clashed with Australia in the past. Moreover, given Indonesia's poor image in south-east Asia, Australia is also reluctant to become identified with a repressive regime. Hostility towards Indonesia remains a theme in Australian politics and any Government (as will be seen shortly in the context of East Timor) has to tread a delicate path between antagonizing a nation which outnumbers Australia 10:1 and yet must avoid being seen as too pro-Indonesian for fear of a domestic backlash. Finally, there is the old problem of Indonesia's instability: the Government is worried that an unstable Indonesia could be tempted to embark upon military adventures as a way of obtaining national unity to unite against a common foreign foe, or that the Government could be replaced by anti-Australian leaders. The Government's policy is: a secure and stable Indonesia is of 'immense and direct concern to

Australia'.[54] This has resulted in Australian military aid to Indonesia[55] – including providing military personnel to map West Irian, which raises the prospect of Australia having to negotiate with the OPM if any of its aircraft crash in OPM-controlled territory and its personnel captured by the OPM.[56]

The Indonesian Foreign Minister, Dr Mochtar Kusamaatmadja, visited Papua New Guinea in December 1978, the first visit by an Indonesian minister since Papua New Guinea independence. His visit coincided with his Government's decision to curtail its military campaigns against the OPM and to adopt a more peaceful way of dealing with West Irian problems.[57] His trip was preceded with news that the OPM leader, Jacob Prai, had been captured on an illegal visit to Papua New Guinea and although the Government refused to hand him over to Indonesia (a decision reluctantly accepted by Indonesia) it seems that his days of combat are over.[58] 1979 therefore dawned with the prospect of more peace on the West Irian border than had happened for some years. In early June 1979, President Suharto visited Papua New Guinea. The joint communique issued by Suharto and Somare contained an agreement that 'measures should be taken against elements misusing their respective territories by conducting hostile acts against Papua New Guinea and Indonesia'.[59] Since no dissidents are using West Irian as a base for operations against the PNG Government, the 'elements' refers to the OPM.

Mr Somare's Government was defeated in a no-confidence motion on 11 March 1980. He was replaced by Sir Julius Chan. The West Irian problem did not figure in the parliamentary wrangle. The Chan Government, which in western terms, is more sympathetic to private economic enterprise, has not introduced any new major foreign policy changes. It wants to remain on good terms with Indonesia and is even more eager to prove to foreign companies that it is a stable place for investment and so will do nothing to encourage West Irian dissidence. It continues in its public statements to respect the border agreement with Indonesia.

It remains to be seen how well Papua New Guinea can implement the agreement. West Irians are physically little different from its own citizens who cross the border at will. Moreover there is no evidence to suggest that the sympathy which its citizens have for West Irian has declined as a result of the two Indonesian visits. In a large country of comparatively few law enforcement officials, information from private citizens on OPM movements is essential. The officials cannot patrol all the border all the time. But it is unlikely that they will get the private information they need to carry out the agreement.

There is no guarantee that the OPM guerrillas, now numbering probably less than a thousand, will necessarily succumb to Indonesia's blandishments and may well continue the campaign.[60] Additionally, there is no guarantee that Indonesia, which has a flair for military overreaction, will continue for long a policy of peaceful persuasion when it believes that military force can solve problems. In short, the guerrillas struggle, though tranquil at the moment, may not decline but may escalate.

After all, the real problem is not one of cross border movements or Indonesian military operations. Instead it is Indonesia's basic policy towards West Irian. It has a racist approach towards the people, it is exploiting the natural resources for its own benefit and doing little for the people, its administration is riddled by corruption, and it is violent towards all who disagree with it. In short, its policy contains the seeds of the policy's eventual destruction – though it is presently unclear how the destruction will come about or what will replace it.

Finally, there is the underlying question of why should West Irian remain in Indonesia? A recent book has presented the question of why should a state like Indonesia, which is based on colonial boundaries, have any special priority over regional or local differences in populations?[61] Indonesia as a state is an accident of colonial history. With a few other events in history, the present nation could be very different. If the Dutch had been more greedy and the British just as apathetic, they could have taken control of all of New Guinea, thereby making Indonesia even larger. It could have included the territory of, say, Brunei.[62] Alternatively, if the Germans had been more aggressive and started taking previously claimed land, rather than being satisfied with unclaimed land, then some of the present Indonesia would have gone from German control to the status of a League of Nations Mandate and then to British or Australian control. The permutations are endless. But the speculation remains that perhaps the people of West Irian would be better off as part of a Melanesian federation.

EAST TIMOR

Introduction

If, consistent with its general weakness, Portugal had retained into the twentieth century only isolated small imperial enclaves in Africa, as in Asia, it is unlikely that there would have been many problems in decolonization. Goa was easily taken by India when Portugal continued to ignore appeals to discuss the question. Macao in China and Timor in Indonesia, are at the mercy of those countries should they decide to take action.[63]

Indonesia took action in 1975. The Portuguese colony, which had unilaterally declared its independence of Lisbon, was overrun and brutal (if hardly publicized) conflict took place, which continues, at a lower intensity, to this day. Indochina has acquired its '27th province', another minority population, and another area of conflict.

As with West Irian, East Timor's future status vis-a-vis Indonesia is not assured. It would appear that a reversion of full independence is unlikely in the near future. But few countries recognize Indonesian control over East Timor. The UN General Assembly and Security Council remain opposed to the Indonesian annexation. Activists around the world[64] are determined to continue the struggle. Most importantly, even though many East Timorese leaders are dead or otherwise out of combat, the people have shown no sign of surrendering to Indonesia. Large areas of East Timor remain outside Indonesian control. Even though the Indonesian Government regards the East Timorese as a 'minority', most of the East Timorese, it is safe to claim, do not wish to see themselves in this light. As with West Irian, this writer reaffirms that the inclusion of East Timor in a study of Indonesia does not imply his acceptance of Indonesian control over East Timor.[65]

As with West Irian, East Timor's future status vis-a-vis Indonesia is not assured. It would appear that a reversion to full independence can never be taken for granted. All that can be said is that at some particular time, the nation consists of a certain number of stable provinces and a certain number in revolt, any one of which may be successful. It is possible that, given the very poor performance of the Indonesian forces in East Timor, other provinces may decide that the time has come again for another attempt at independence. The West Irian conflict must be seen in this light. The increase in guerrilla activities was partly related to the OPM wishing to exploit the force's weakness by being deployed in East Timor. Similarly the Government's recent change in policy, away from such a severe military line, is in part a reaction to western (mainly American) advice that a guerrilla conflict cannot be settled by military means alone and that more should be done to win the hearts and minds of people. Also, it is a reflection of a fact of military life: the Government, because of East Timor, does not have the military capacity to wage a major campaign in West Irian. In short, although Indonesia claims East Timor to be part of it, the cost of acquiring it may weaken the Government's capacity to control all the other potential or actual areas of disintegration.

East Timor: Geography and History

That a fine, white sandalwood of very high quality grew freely in Timor, ensured this relatively insignificant looking tree would become the magnet attracting many peoples to the small island. Lying so close to populations to whom the aromatic sandalwood was a necessity, Timor assumed all the glory and wonder of Paradise in the minds of the surrounding merchant traders and was already producing quantities of sandalwood for the Chinese market, many hundreds of years before Vasco da Gama sailed round the Cape of Good Hope.[66]

East Timor is part of the Lesser Sundas archipelago, running east of Java. The entire chain of islands represents less than 4% of Indonesia's total land area. The Timorese terrain is rugged and the weather tropical, with violent monsoons during December to April.

The island of Timor is something of a racial meeting-point, a place populated by successive waves of migrants, predominantly Malay and Melanesian. Arab, Chinese and African faces are also part of the Timorese crowd (the Africans were brought as slaves or conscript soldiers by the Portuguese); some faces also bear features strikingly similar to those of the

Australian Aborigine. Timor has been described as 'a Babel, resulting from the convergence of more varied ethnic groups, or an inextricable melting-pot of ethnic groups'.

The Atoni ('people of the dry land'), who have inhabited the central highlands of the island for centuries, are believed to have been the original inhabitants of Timor. They speak a language known as Timorese or Vaiqueno. The Tetum-speaking Belu are more recent intruders. The Atoni occupy most of what is now Indonesian Timor. The Belu people are located on the rich southern coastal plain which extends either side of the border, although their greater number is concentrated in the east. The migrations of both Atoni and Belu occurred many centuries ago, so that a distinct Timorese culture existed well before European colonization. Indeed the Tetum word 'malai' meaning foreigner, has become a concept important to all Timorese and the theme of the Timorese united against the malai is deeply embedded in Timorese history. Overall, the dominant racial groups are Proto-Malay with an admixture of Papuan and Melanesian types, largely in the interior of East Timor. The frizzy hair of many of the Atoni points to Melanesian descent, while most Belu people have wavy to straight hair, similar to the Malays.[67]

Timor fell under European colonization during the period when Portugal's empire-building days were drawing to a close and they were more concerned with holding on to what they had rather than acquiring new colonies, while the Dutch empire-building was getting into full swing. The Portuguese landed in Timor in about 1520 looking for the sandalwood tree. In 1566 Portuguese Dominican friars established a base from which to win converts. Christianity and trade, as usual, were to go hand in hand. By the end of the sixteenth century, Timor was Portuguese territory and the sandalwood export industry was well underway. The land still suffers from that exploitation because of soil erosion and poor soil texture. In 1613, the Dutch commenced what was to be a campaign lasting decades in which they sought to gain control of Timor and the surrounding small islands. This was but an example of the wider struggle going on between the two nations, with Dutch acquisitions in what is now Indonesia being matched by increased Portuguese determination to hold on to what remained of their empire in this area.

The Dutch finally got control of West Timor in 1859 and held on to it until 1949 when, with the rest of present day Indonesia (except West Irian) it was given its freedom from The Netherlands. The Portuguese managed to hold on to East Timor and the enclave in West Timor called Oecusse Ambeno. It is worth noting that both colonial powers had problems maintaining their control, not only with respect to one another, but from the Timorese people, who were neither easy to colonize nor favourably disposed towards European rule. Rebellions continued during this century.

West Timor has a population of about 900,000 people. Most live from fishing or from a subsistence farming. Until the events in 1974, very little attention was paid by the outside world to this part of Indonesia and even now little is known because of the isolation and rugged terrain.

East Timor, consisting of about 19,000 square kilometres (just over 7,400 square miles), had in 1970 610,541 people. Over 30 UN member-states have populations below one million and some are very poor. It is worth noting, then, that in terms of UN membership, an independent East Timor would have been in theory possible and in keeping with trends among new member-states. But Indonesia did not permit this.[68]

From Colony to Independence to Indonesian Invasion

On 2 December 1975 Adam Malik (the then Indonesian Foreign Minister) visited Atambua in Indonesian Timor, where military training of anti-FRETILIN forces had been taking place for nearly a year: There he announced to the press 'Diplomacy is finished. It is now up to the people of East Timor'. He told the leaders of the pro-Indonesian parties 'You are racing against time, and you face a tough struggle ahead. However you need not worry, we will give you our full support, quietly or openly. Now we meet at Atambua, and soon we shall meet again in Dili (capital of East Timor). I expect you to invite me to come to Dili soon. The solution to the Timor problem is now in the front line of battle.' Of course this last statement shocked many of the Jakarta diplomats, especially the Australians, who had always believed they could persuade the Indonesians against a violent solution to 'the Timor problem'.[69]

The fate of Portuguese Timor was changed in April 1974, when the Armed Forces Movement took over in Portugal and ended the dictatorship of Marcello Caetano. For well over a decade, Portugal had been waging a bitter campaign to hold on to its colonies, whose total area was twenty-two times the size of Portugal, and was ruining Portugal in the process, since expenditure per capita was exceeding that of the United States in the Vietnam conflict. One of the main policies of the new rulers, then, was to dissolve that liability as quickly as possible but in an orderly fashion. Events in Africa soon showed that the colonies could be given independence either quickly or in an orderly fashion, but not both.

East Timor was different from the African colonies in one major respect. In Africa, the conflict had been so intense that it was the main factor in initiating the Armed Forces Movement. East Timor, by contrast, had been comparatively tranquil. There was the residual hostility of the people towards their Portuguese rulers but there were few political activists in the western sense. Catholicism and animism were the main concerns of the people; not political ideology.

East Timor came low down on the list of the new Government's priorities. It was the colony furthest away from Portugal and its relative tranquillity meant that the continued presence of Portuguese forces would be a minimal economic burden. But in retrospect, it is clear that the April 1974 revolution revived old ideas of independence and so it was wrong for the Government to think that it had time on its side in dealing with East Timor. The Government was confronted by three main political viewpoints: the UDT Party (Uniao Democratica Timorense) advocated in general terms some continued Portuguese control; the APODETI Party (Associacão Popular Democratica Timorense) advocated East Timor's integration into Indonesia, and FRETILIN advocated complete independence. The Frente Revolucionaria do Timor Leste Independente (Revolutionary Front of Independent East Timor) was formed in September 1974 and was inspired by the revolutionary nationalism of African leaders like Eduardo Mondlane, Agostinho Neto and Amilcar Cabral. A forerunner had been the Social Democratic Association of Timor, formed in April 1974. The change of name reflected a broadening of the political foundation of the party so as to include a wide range of persons motivated by the common concern of national independence. Despite Indonesian allegations, it was not a communist party as such.

The Lisbon Government was in a difficult position. Chaos at home and in the African colonies meant that it had little time for mediating between these factions. Indeed, the factions were different from the usual pre-independence groupings which agree over ends but not over means. These factions, which were at the time largely unrepresentative of the majority of Timorese, disagreed over both ends and means so that no compromise was possible. The political wrangling went on throughout 1974, with temporary political coalitions being formed and then dissolved.

By mid-1975 it seemed that the Government had found a basis for a new constitution, with an election to take place in October 1976 and for complete independence to be given in October 1978. FRETILIN, which had boycotted some of the negotiations, insisted that there be immediate and full independence. It was the UDT, however, which forced the pace of events by seizing, on 11 August 1975, key installations in the colony's two main cities. The Government dithered, partly because it could not rely on the loyalty of its Timorese troops. Its representatives fled the colony. Most of the troops went over to FRETILIN and this was a decisive factor in its winning the ensuring civil war. About 2,000 people were killed in the conflict. FRETILIN became the de facto Government.

In retrospect, the period between the FRETILIN victory and the Indonesian invasion three months later, was by Timorese standards, a golden age. FRETILIN started immediately to make good the damage caused by 450 years of Portuguese rule. The economy was geared to produce goods for Portugal; now it had to look after itself. Some steps were taken to introduce political reforms, especially at village level. Agricultural co-operatives were created; mass literacy campaigns were commenced in rural areas; Timorese, rather than Portuguese culture, was revived. Visitors to East Timor at this time, were impressed with the progress that was being made. FRETILIN, by these reforms, converted itself from a political faction to the ruling body of East Timor. Its achievement was immense. It was this early and temporary golden age which has no doubt inspired the people to fight the Indonesian invaders. On 28 November 1975, FRETILIN declared the colony to be independent. It renamed the area the Democratic Republic of East Timor. Lisbon refused to recognize the declaration. In legal terms, the decision may have been premature, since there is no guarantee that it had full control over the territory to which it claimed title. But FRETILIN was clearly consolidating its command and so it was only a matter of time. Also, for DRET to have come into existence, would not have required the acceptance of the declaration by the Lisbon Government anyway. The main proof of just how successful was FRETILIN, is Indonesia's reaction. It invaded in early December 1975.

Indonesia's Involvement in East Timor

It is clear now that the Democratic Republic of East Timor was living on borrowed time. It was soon to be engulfed by forces (both military and political) over which it had little control and often little perception. Indonesia, and not Portugal, became the main external agent governing East Timor's fate.

The decision to invade East Timor would not have been made lightly. The Government had, it is true, been planning for it since the Lisbon coup in April 1974. The extent of the invasion alone indicated that the Government had decided to launch a major offensive since it perceived (quite correctly) that only a major operation would stand any chance of success. The East Timorese were too supportive of their new Government to be easily cowed.

But launching an invasion represented one of the most important decisions made by the present Indonesian Government. The Government had enough problems to cope with, without adding the invasion of East Timor. There was the risk that the invasion would not be successful and that its armed forces would not only be damaged (in terms of losses and a drop in morale) but also that its capacity to quell other potential or actual rebels would be undermined. Even if the attack were successful, the Indonesian Government would have to devote resources to administering its new conquest. A third possibility (which has eventuated) was of a no-win-no-lose situation. The possibility of being sucked into a protracted conflict in East Timor would increase the risk of other provinces renewing their efforts to obtain independence – in seeking to hold on to East Timor, Indonesia could lose other parts of the nation. Additionally, given Indonesia's fragile economy (even more fragile at this time with the Pertamina collapse) a protracted military campaign would be expensive both in terms of the direct military cost and in its potential deterrent effect on foreign aid and investment. Finally, there was the wider impact which such an invasion would have upon Indonesia's standing in the world. The invasion would be a blatant event. There could be no disguising its Indonesian origin. While East Timor had received far less UN and other international attention during the period of Portuguese rule than had the African colonies, it was attracting attention in the mid-1970s as part of the post-April 1974 events. Non-governmental organizations and individuals concerned about human rights could be expected to publicize the invasion. The international attention would get worse if the East Timorese put up a spirited defence of their land. It could result in sanctions or other international action by the UN or individual governments.

However, the Government decided that the invasion should go ahead. By December 1975 it had become apparent that the pro-Indonesian APODETI was not gaining in popularity and so the people were unlikely to vote themselves into the status of an Indonesian province. Additionally, FRETILIN was doing comparatively well at running the country. Indonesia had to act quickly.

First, if FRETILIN continued to run the country smoothly and the so-called Republic received diplomatic recognition from other governments, then Indonesia would find it difficult to invade an independent nation since this would be a contravention of international law and one which would bring Indonesia into disrepute and threaten its foreign aid and investment. Indonesia could only act safely during a period of chaos, when it could claim that it was there to restore order since Portugal was unable or unwilling to do so. Later 1975 may have been the last time of chaos.

Second, a flourishing East Timor would have encouraged other parts of Indonesia to renew their campaigns for independence. West Timor perhaps could have tried for independence or even association with East Timor. West Irian certainly increased its operations.

Third, Indonesia was worried about who would be the eventual rulers of East Timor. Newly independent countries, irrespective of how well they commence their period of independence, often fall into disarray. While FRETILIN was not communist, there was a risk that the so-called Republic could become, in effect, another Cuba, with the Republic's rulers turning to the eastern European bloc or China for financial assistance. It is worth recalling that the new nation was one of the world's poorest and there is a limit to what any people can achieve on their own; even China has now recognized that a quick programme of technological development requires western assistance. East Timor may have gone to the west for help, but this would have been unlikely to bear fruit because the west also had an interest in maintaining a strong and stable Indonesia, and a flourishing East Timor would have undermined that goal. The only alternative would have been the communist nations.

Fourth, there is this allegation:

> I believe that, beyond the efforts of the Indonesian Government to justify its invasion of East Timor 'to restore peace and order', the truth is that Indonesia has become some kind of policeman in South-East Asia. With the extraordinary victories of the heroic peoples of Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos, the balance of power in that region has been radically changed and Indonesia has perforce become the stronghold of imperialism, which has now changed its conventional policy of direct intervention and adopted the strategy of war by proxy. East Timor is situated in a strategic area vital to the imperialist economic and nuclear strategy in the region.[70]

1975 was a troubled year for the United States, with the ending of its Indochina policy and the fear that Indochina could become an aggressive communist bloc. It is the type of coincidence that conspiracy theory devotees so enjoy, that President Ford and Dr Kissinger were in Jakarta only days before Indonesia's invasion of East Timor.[71] This author does not wish to discuss[72] in this report the validity of such allegations. There is, however, the more general implication for the protection of human rights, that their protection is often subservient to larger political matters and their fate is decided by matters other than the merits of their own case.

An example of this conclusion is Australia. The fate of East Timor has created more domestic political upheavals within Australia including with members of the Government's own party, than most other foreign issues have done in recent years. The support for East Timor's independence has been motivated by, among other things, the usual caution in all matters concerning Indonesian expansionist activities, a desire to stand up for the underdog, a desire to see the process of decolonization carried through completely and not stopped at East Timor's becoming another colony, and memories of the help received by Australian troops from the Timorese people (of whom 40,000 were killed) fighting the Japanese in World War II.[73] Also, about 200,000 Timorese are Catholics and some Australians, who would not normally be involved in this type of issue are involved because of the persecution of their Catholic brethren.

In late 1974 it was evident that the Whitlam Government was on the verge of a crisis over East Timor but preferred to do nothing.[74] During 1975 the Government did not do anything to deter an Indonesian invasion and may have encouraged one merely by not trying to stop it. The Opposition may have been more forthright in private by hinting to Indonesia that Australia (which it was soon to control) would not stop an invasion.[75] In late 1975, the Opposition engineered a political crisis which coincided with the invasion. It is clear that seeing Australia engulfed in this crisis, Indonesia decided to act. It is most unlikely that any Australian Government would have used force to stop Indonesia. But it could at least have used a very strong weapon: the threat to undermine Indonesia's international reputation as a stable nation, thereby threatening its foreign aid and investment. The Governor-General sacked the Whitlam Government and the Liberal-Country Party was back in power. They have complained about the methods used in waging the war, but have not questioned the takeover – even though some of the harshest critics have been their own backbenchers or state Liberal politicians.[76]

Australia's policy of not intervening to help East Timor has a number of motivations. First, it is troubled by the fear of invasion of this turbulent giant. It believes that the best way of handling Indonesia is to be friendly towards it. Second, it supports the idea of a strong and stable Indonesia and the absorption of East Timor was a price to pay for that idea. Third, like Indonesia, Australia was worried about East Timor becoming another 'Cuba', thereby providing the communist nations with a foothold only 200 miles north of Darwin. Finally, negotiations between Indonesia and Australia in the early 1970s on the division of the seabed between their nations, to facilitate oil exploration, left a gap in the area around East Timor (then still, of course, under Portuguese control). Australia wanted to conclude the negotiations and decided that this could best be achieved with Indonesia, rather than an independent East Timor.

The Australian abdication of responsibility for the protection of human rights in East Timor has had implications for aiding Indonesia's invasion. First, Australia is not without some influence in international affairs and it could have, for example, threatened to publicize at the UN and elsewhere the full story of Indonesia's invasion – with a view to deterring the invasion. Under the Whitlam Labor Government, Australia was for the first time making a determined effort to establish firm relations with the Third World. It thus had good contacts with both the western group of nations and the Third World. It chose not to use that leverage to stimulate a campaign for an independent East Timor.

On the contrary, Australia has used its influence to help Indonesia. It was one of the first nations (on 20 January 1978[77]) to recognize 'de facto' Indonesian control over East Timor. At the UN, Australia has supported the Indonesian point of view. Australia is, in effect, the West's outpost in South-East Asia and so plays an important role in alerting Western governments to events in its region. Over East Timor it has used its influence to encourage western governments to not oppose Indonesian policy. With greater problems nearer home, these governments have been willing to follow Australian advice. Domestically, the Government (and, ironically, one of its bitterest critics, Gough Whitlam) have tried to 'talk down' the issue by urging Australians to forget the invasion and the deaths of Australian personnel, in preference for fostering better relations with Indonesia. Meanwhile, again to remain on good terms with the Indonesian Government, it is doing little to reunite in Australia East Timorese families. It has granted permission to East Timorese refugees living outside Timor to join families in Australia. But, as regards those eligible persons in East Timor, it has no leverage over Indonesia since it has decided to support it over East Timor and so can only proceed at the virtually non-existent pace permitted by Indonesia. Overall, Australia's pusillanimous pose is in marked contrast with its aggressive stances over problems far further from its shores, such as Poland and Afghanistan, and its unprecedented help over the negotiations leading to independence in Zimbabwe.

Second, one of the main problems in discussing East Timor's recent history has been the lack of information of events in that area. The Australian Government's top-secret Defence Signals Directorate has monitored Indonesian army field radio traffic and so was as well informed of the combat as any Indonesian official not in the combat zone. It knew (as we now know[78]) as soon as the Indonesian headquarters, for example, that 'white men' (that is, five Australian journalists) were killed in Balibo in 1975. But the Whitlam and Fraser Governments have revealed none of this information. Moreover, both Governments have been anxious to cut FRETILIN's radio link with the outside world (based at Darwin in the Northern Territory). The East Timorese now have few alternative outlets for news; the main one being refugees.[79]

Indonesia's Impact

East Timor has incurred, in percentage terms, greater suffering from the Indonesian invasion than almost any other victim of an invasion this century. The extent of the population loss remains unclear, though it is massive. The most recent discussion on this was focussed on the Indonesian Government's own figures. The last Portuguese census was in 1970 and from it a population of 610,541 was arrived at. Assuming a population increase of an annual rate of around 2%, the population in December 1975 would have exceeded 670,000. The Indonesian Church itself put the population in 1974 at 688,771. The lower official figure probably arose from persons avoiding the census to avoid taxation. Even on a conservative estimate, then, there were at least 650,000 East Timorese alive in December 1975.

However, according to Indonesia's Central Bureau of Statistics the population as at December 1980 was 552,954. In other words, at least 15% of the population died during the first five years of Indonesia's invasion. This is all the more startling since Indonesia claims that, with so much support among the East Timorese people for its policies, there had been minimal loss of life.

Meanwhile, sources outside Indonesia have put the figure as high as 50%. Equally disturbing is the way in which the suffering shows no sign of easing. The Indonesians are still proceeding with 'Operasi Keamanan' (Operation Security), for example, which is designed to push the guerrillas from their camps in the Eastern and Western corners of the territory into the more arid central district of Manatuto. Deaths are originating not only from the continued fighting but from the famine. Despite Indonesian claims to the contrary, it looks very much like that the Government is seeking to starve East Timor into submission.[80]

Indonesia's invasion has been marked by a degree of barbarity which many people outside the area find difficult to comprehend. Even 'senior Indonesian officials have been admitting privately for some time that certain army units got "out of hand" at the start of the take-over of East Timor in December 1975'.[81] While individual allegations of torture or murder may be disputed, the overall pattern of the allegations adds up to a horrifying picture of Indonesian violence.

It is possible, given recent studies of other guerrilla conflicts and from what is known of the Indonesian Government's motivations, to explain the high level of violence. First, the East Timorese did not want Indonesian control over their lives. As the Vietnam conflicts (against Japan, France, the United States and its allies) all showed, conventional armed forces fighting a highly motivated people on their own rugged or jungle terrain are very difficult (if not impossible) to beat.

Second, after two years of secret preparations, the Indonesian forces expected the December 1975 invasion to secure victory, by virtue of the surprise and extent of invading forces. Instead, they have become increasingly frustrated and embittered. As a consequence the violence has remained, if only because the Indonesian atrocities have not so much cowed the people as make them even more determined not to submit to Indonesian rule. Additionally, Indonesia's rampant corruption meant that materials destined for the armed forces have been siphoned off into private pockets.

Third, the Indonesian Government is waging a conflict against almost an entire people. Lacking sophisticated intelligence and a geographically confined area of military operations, the Government is obliged to use methods which cause indiscriminate suffering (such as destruction of arable land and crops) as a way of coercing people into submission.

East Timor and the Protection of Human Rights

East Timor's post-1974 history is one of the greatest tragedies of this century. At least 15% (according to official Indonesian figures) of an entire population had been killed in the invasion. The conflict continues. Although the East Timorese people on current showing will not repel the invaders in the near future, they look like continuing the fight until the end. Given the success rate of recent cases of guerrilla warfare, eventual Indonesian victory is far from guaranteed.

The purpose of this final section is to look at the wider implications for the protection of human rights and for Indonesia posed by the East Timor invasion. Since this writer does not regard the East Timorese as an Indonesian 'minority', care is taken to stress that the section is concerned with human rights in general, rather than the rights of a minority population.

First, the invasion was facilitated by certain Western governments. It is ironic that all the main ones (Australia, the U.S., Britain and the Netherlands) pride themselves on their work for the protection of human rights. Their complicity damages their record.

Their duplicity may be seen in four ways. First, they have had an overriding concern both to prevent East Timor from becoming another 'Cuba' and to ensure good relations with Indonesia. As an American official has said:

> The US Government did not question the incorporation of East Timor into Indonesia at the time (17 July 1976). This did not represent a legal judgment or endorsement of what took place. It was, simply, the judgment of those responsible for our policy in the area that the integration was an accomplished fact, that the realities of the situation would not be changed by our opposition to what had occurred, and that *such a policy would not serve our best interests in the light of the importance of our relations with Indonesia.*[82] (Emphasis added)

Those governments did little (if anything) to ensure the implementation of the UN Security Council Resolutions (384 of 22 December 1975 and 389 of 22 April 1976) which, inter alia, called for Indonesian withdrawal from East Timor. UN General Assembly Resolutions are not binding. But Security Council Resolutions are: 'The members of the United Nations agree to accept and carry out the decisions of the Security Council in accordance with the present Charter' (UN Charter: Article 25).

These governments have supplied some of the military equipment used in the invasion.[83] They expressed disquiet about its use in East Timor. But the sales go on (such as the British Government's approval of the sale of eight BAC Hawk ground attack aircraft – which are particularly suitable for East Timor's combat conditions, with their capacity to fly low and drop napalm and defoliants).

Finally, these governments have financial ties with Indonesia. On the one hand, the ties provide potential leverage on the Indonesian Government, which they have preferred not to use. On the other hand, the protracted East Timor conflict, by tying down Indonesian forces and possibly stimulating parts of Indonesia into rebellion, jeopardizes that investment. Except for the arms manufacturers, these countries would be better off using their financial influence to stop the invasion – rather than risking the damage to their investments and loans.

Second, the UN was seized with the crisis almost as soon as the troops landed on East Timor. It had long been involved with East Timor as an area for decolonization. But the invasion brought a fresh air of crisis and tragedy. The UN General Assembly's first Resolution (3485[XXX]) was adopted five days after the invasion commenced; the Security Council's fifteen days. Both the invasion itself and the methods of armed conflict have been contrary to international law.[84]

The question has remained before the UN. It has not been the subject of any further Security Council resolutions but it is discussed each year at the General Assembly. But the resolutions have the monotonous repetition associated with many of its other pronouncements which are made grandly but with little hope of implementation. The General Assembly, which still regards Portugal as the administering power, has reaffirmed the East Timor people's inalienable right to self-determination and independence in accordance with the principles of the UN Charter and the 1960 General Assembly Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples, and it has expressed regret at the critical situation in East Timor resulting from the outbreak of famine. Voting over recent years has indicated a gradual, though far from decisive, shift in Indonesia's favour. At the 1979 session, 62 nations voted for the resolution, 31 opposed it and 45 abstained; in 1980 the figures were: 58–35–46; and in 1981, 54–42–46 (the discrepancies in total figures year to year being due to representatives of some of the smaller nations not being present at the time of voting).

And yet the UN's involvement has been indecisive. Despite the large majorities supporting the UN resolutions, the implementation has not matched the voting. The attitude of some Western governments was discussed above. As to the rest of the world, it would seem (with the exception of Portugal's former African colonies) that no major political bloc has been willing to insist that the UN do more than have some negotiations (which go nowhere) with the main protagonists. Indonesia enjoys a reflected glory (hardly still deserved) among Third World nations for its early work in creating (under Sukarno) the Third World voting bloc. They apparently cannot bring themselves to urge against Indonesia the same sort of sanctions they advocate against South Africa. Additionally, they often have problems with minorities (some of whom they acquired by invasion, notably India – Goa). There is a general reluctance to air minority problems at the UN.

On present showing, however, the UN General Assembly will have East Timor on its annual agenda for some years to come.

Indonesia's main hope is to be able eventually to have the annual resolution defeated. It cannot meet the General Assembly's request to respect the East Timorese right to self-determination since it would still seem that most people will opt for independence. Meanwhile, the governments which sympathize with the East Timorese are not going back down on their basic demands. It is possible that Indonesia could try for some form of West Irian-type compromise, whereby East Timor could be handed over to the UN as a transitional stage and then transferred formally to Indonesian control. Among the various problems associated with this scheme is that, having gone to the UN, the UN may then decide not to hand it over to Indonesia. Also, the West Irian experience itself may recall Indonesia's dreadful human rights record and so deter any further consideration of this suggestion. Additionally, in West Irian's case, it was a matter of the UN transferring control from a colonial power (the Netherlands) to a liberating one (Indonesia). In East Timor's case, Indonesia is, ironically, the colonial power. Meanwhile, the Security Council cannot be expected to break the deadlock since its veto-bearing Permanent Members are themselves divided. At the 1981 General Assembly session, for example, China and the USSR supported the resolution, the United States opposed it, while Britain and France abstained. In short, the East Timorese cannot count on any decisive UN action to assist them.

Third, the foreign mass media have played a disgraceful role in reporting (or non-reporting or misreporting) the East Timor invasion. There are certain exceptions, such as some small circulation left-wing newspapers and the small circulation conservative newspapers in Australia: *Age* (Melbourne), *Sydney Morning Herald* and *National Times* (Sydney). In a Statement to a UN Committee, Noam Chomsky was particularly scathing in his criticism of the foreign mass media, especially when compared with their far greater coverage of the Cambodia situation.[85] The Western-owned mass media (which dominate the mass media of many other countries) have been too willing to accept the point of view of Western governments. Their appetite for investigative journalism (as illustrated during the Watergate scandal) has not extended to East Timor. Their appetite for 'human interest' stories of tragedy and suffering (as illustrated over the Indochinese boat people) has not extended to East Timor.

Fourth, who *is* helping the East Timorese? With the Indonesians still killing them, and with Western governments, the UN generally and most foreign mass media barely concerned about their fate, they have (with the exception of Portugal's former African colonies) only some non-governmental organizations (NGOs) on their side, for example, the Australian Campaign for an Independent East Timor and its equivalent organizations overseas, and the New York-based International League for Human Rights. There are also some individuals acting in their own capacity, such as Australian public servant (once based in Dili) J.S. Dunn.[86] There have also been books and articles written about East Timor by both activists and academics.[87] East Timor's fate has not, therefore, gone unnoticed – despite the obstacles with which NGOs and individuals have had to cope. It is a sad reflection of the international community's concern about the protection of human rights (which is making progress elsewhere) that 10 or even 50 per cent of a country's population can be wiped out and the only support which the victims receive is from NGOs and concerned individuals, because governments believe that opposition to the invasion 'would not serve our best interests in the light of the importance of our relations with Indonesia'. Needless to say the East Timor situation emphasizes the importance of NGOs and individuals in the international protection of human rights.

Finally, there is the Indonesian Government. Its troops face a protracted struggle, which may not be victorious. Resources which its people need for their own development, are being squandered on this invasion. Even if the Government does eventually gain control over all of East Timor, its problems will not be over. After centuries of colonial exploitation, the country's land is damaged. The Indonesian method of conflict has contributed to that damage. The country was already one of the world's poorest in 1975; its condition now is even worse. It remains to be seen how the Government will be able to finance East Timor's recovery – if at all.

On the other hand, if the Government were to withdraw its forces today, it would have left a wound on East Timor which will take decades to heal. Its population has been decimated, most of its leaders are dead, its land ruined and its infrastructure (almost non-existent to start with) largely destroyed. Of all of Indonesia's violations of human rights, the invasion of East Timor is the worst. Whilst it is important that international pressure be maintained upon the Government to release its political prisoners, there is also need to campaign for an independent East Timor.

The East Timorese are members of that select group of peoples found around the world: ones who are truly self-reliant. Given the lack of international assistance from most governments and the UN, they have only NGOs, concerned individuals and the former Portuguese African colonies, to provide political assistance. At home, they are on their own. Their survival as a people depends upon their own efforts and their ability to withstand Indonesian terror.

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[14] For a more optimistic assessment of this programme, see: Department of State, *Country Reports on Human Practices*, US Government Printing Office, Washington DC, 1978, pp 234-43. Also: the 1979 edition of this Report, pp 358-70.

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[16] Revised 'Introduction' to its *Report on Indonesia*, October 1978 (mimeo).

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[24] For general background, see: Bruce Grant et al., *The Boat People*, London, 1979.

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[71] Recent information has supported this theory: see 'Kissinger's Personal Instructions', *New Statesman*, 21 November 1980, and 'Green Light to Invade Timor', *The Australian*, 20 December 1980.

[72] Attention is drawn, however, to footnote 34 above, where it is pointed out that when the US had to choose either Indonesia or Australia to support, it chose Indonesia, thereby indicating the priority it accorded Indonesia over its more traditional ally.

[73] Among the most important critics of the Governments are a diverse range of organizations including churches, foreign aid organizations and trade unions (including the Australian Journalists Association, five of whose members died in suspicious and still unexplained circumstances – probably being killed by Indonesian troops – but about which the Australian Government has done little).

[74] Michael Richardson, 'East Timor: the War Australia Might Have Prevented', *National Times*, 19 July 1976. In April 1977, the then Indonesian Foreign Minister, Adam Malik, said that Mr Whitlam was told in advance that Indonesia planned to invade East Timor. Mr Whitlam denied that he had been informed. See: 'Whitlam 'Knew of Timor Raid in Advance'', *The Australian*, 22 April 1977; 'Timor Denial by Whitlam', *Sydney Morning Herald*, 27 April 1977. Despite the denials, it is likely that the Labour Government did know.

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[78] Hamish McDonald, 'Death at Balibo', *National Times*, 7 July 1979.

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[83] Ibid., p 325

[84] Supra note 77, pp 1-2.

[85] Noam Chomsky, *Statement delivered to the Fourth Committee of the UN General Assembly*, November 1978 (mimeo). Partly reprinted in: 'East Timor: the Press Cover-Up'. *Inquiry* (Philadelphia), 19 February 1979, pp 9-15.

[86] J.S. Dunn, *The East Timor Situation: Report on Talks with Timorese Refugees in Portugal*, 11 February 1977 (mimeo). (Mr Dunn works at the Legislative Research Service, Parliament House, Canberra ACT, 2600.)

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APPENDIX

Submission by Ms Sue Nichterlein to the Australian Senate Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and Defence, 25 March 1982

The most compelling feature of the situation in East Timor is that so little is known about it, due to the Indonesian policy of cordoning off the territory from international inspection. There is no free traffic into or out of the territory of East Timor. Such Timorese as have come from the territory in the six and a half years of Indonesian occupation have done so at considerable risk and expense. There is no knowing how many Timorese have tried to escape, but have failed.

Fewer than fifty people have been permitted to visit the territory in these years. Most of these visitors have been representatives of the Australian or United States Embassies in Jakarta; they did not make public reports on what they saw in most instances. About 10 were officials of international aid agencies; they too did not make public statements about what they saw. About a dozen journalists have entered the country in 6 years. Most of them have reported critically on what they saw. No visitor to East Timor in the last six years has been permitted to stay more than 4 days; most stayed 36 hours. Most were given the same tour of the same localities in Indonesian Army transport in the company of Indonesian officials. No visitors to the territory in the last 6 years spoke the local language, Tetum. No observer from the United Nations has succeeded in visiting East Timor for the last six years, despite repeated calls for a mission of inquiry in United Nations Committees.

Despite this effort to keep East Timor cordoned, by the middle of 1979 all the major newspapers of the world had accepted as tragically credible reports from refugees and welfare workers that at least 100,000 people had died in East Timor since the arrival of the Indonesian Army in December 1975. The London *Guardian, International Herald Tribune, New York Times, Washington Post*, London *Observer* and *Le Monde* have all accepted the credibility of reports that were originally scoffed at when James Dunn made them to a US Congressional Committee in March 1977. In late 1979 an Australian journalist, Peter Rodgers, brought back (by subterfuge) the first photographic proof of starvation and malnutrition in East Timor, photographs that were widely received as being as terrible as those that emerged from Biafra or Kampuchea.

The British journalist David Watts reported in the London *Times* on 28 December 1977:

"There is little doubt, however, that with the estimates of dead from all causes since 1975 running anywhere between 50,000 and 300,000, the civilian population suffered far more casualties than the fighters on either side when they were trapped in the mountains by the Indonesian strategy of starving out Fretilin."

The American journalist Henry Kamm reported in the *New York Times* on 28 January 1980 that the Indonesians were trying to congregate the people of East Timor into 'resettlement' areas:

"A specialist in Timorese agriculture said that the [resettlement] plan had been drawn largely for strategic reasons, placing the population where the Indonesian Army can control it. . . . The resettlement project, the specialist said, will make East Timor permanently dependent on food imports."

This evidence compelled even the most pro-integrationist of Australian journalists, Peter Hastings (who had been the *only* journalist, Indonesian or Western, ever to have perceived UDT as a stronger party than Fretilin in the pre-invasion period), to comment in the *New York Times* of 26 December 1979:

"The deaths of 100,000 Timorese from disease, starvation and military operations in the civil war and subsequent Indonesian intervention are a source of continuing resentment among many Australians." In May 1980 the Indonesian Armed Forces permitted another pro-integrationist, the American academic, Donald B. Weatherbee, to visit the territory. Weatherbee reported:

"Chronically food-deficient, malaria-ridden, lacking modern economic and social infrastructure, East Timor could not withstand the shocks of war and the consequent displacement and dispersal of the population. The East Timorese were pushed over the brink of disaster into the abyss of a human tragedy. Perhaps 15 percent of the population died as a direct and indirect result of the political struggle by wounds, famine, exposure and disease. East Timor became a country of internal refugees as hundreds of thousands of villagers fled or were driven to the high woods and mountains. The pattern of agriculture was broken. Laboriously established corn and rice fields reverted to nature. Livestock herds were decimated; killed or running wild into the forest. Villages were put to the torch by rival groups or bombarded by artillery. The human suffering on the individual level was intense."

Professor Weatherbee was alert to the problems of the Indonesian military's resettlement camps:

"There is a basic problem, however, that will not be easily overcome. The agricultural foundation of these large resettlement centers is inadequate to provide for them. The restrictions imposed on access to land away from the centers means that larger populations have to be supported on less land . . . the cement holding the people in the resettlement areas seems to be not so much administrative coercion (although that there is) as the fact that it is here that one finds the ICRC and CRS feeding and medical points."

Professor Weatherbee was also unimpressed by the vaunted achievements of the rice-growing project at Maliana:

"The one area in East Timor where agricultural production has returned to the level of the *status quo ante*, or perhaps even above, is in Maliana, the government's developmental showplace. Here wet-rice fields secured by an expanding irrigation system yield a surplus. Because of the topography, road systems, distances, and economic rewards Maliana is oriented to bordering West Timor and the market at Atambua, so that contiguous zones in the same *kabupaten* (Bobonaro) have no direct benefit from this, in terms of relieving their food deficit."

The *New York Times* drew its own conclusions in an editorial on 25 July 1980:

"Perhaps a third of the 600,000 East Timorese have perished through war, military occupation and famine. The extent of the disaster can only be estimated because Indonesia will not permit relief agencies or the press to have unrestricted access to the area. . . . Refugee priests charge that much of the food intended for the starving – including nearly $13 million worth of American aid – has been embezzled by Indonesian officials."

In response to a request under the Freedom of Information Act, the Office of US Foreign Disaster Assistance of the Agency for International Development (AID) of the US Department of State has provided the auditor's report of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) submitted to Geneva in August 1980 and a report from the Catholic Relief Services on its program of emergency assistance to East Timor from June 1979 though August 1980. From these two reports it is possible to build up some idea of the relief operations in East Timor in these months of 1980 in lieu of the scrutiny that visits by international observers usually provide for such programs. Peat, Marwick, Mitchell & Co. note in their report to the International Committee of the Red Cross that

"relief operations in East Timor have been carried out under the auspices of the Indonesian Red Cross (PMI) with the ICRC providing material and technical support. This is not the usual method by which the ICRC conducts its activities throughout the world, the links established with the local national Red Cross being normally confined to operational matters. However, in the case of East Timor, detailed operational activity and accounting functions were entrusted to the PMI, whilst the ICRC, besides providing material and technical support, monitored the financial and medical progress of the relief operation."

In fact, an audit was not carried out, because the auditors were not permitted to visit East Timor. Instead, they went to Jakarta for five days in July and checked the Jakarta records of the ICRC against its Geneva records. They took on trust the listings of goods received in Dili by the PMI and the delivery notes and distribution reports prepared by the PMI on despatches of relief commodities to sub-warehouses or village stores in East Timor. Most of the goods distributed were bought in Jakarta and shipped across to Timor; some were bought in Dili itself which is an oddity in a relief program meant to alleviate shortages. All in all, the ICRC spent 5,046,006 Swiss francs ($3,032,403) to deliver 5,123,046 Swiss Francs ($3,073,837) worth of relief commodities in East Timor. The report notes:

"Major savings have resulted from the direct delivery to Dili of goods donated by the Australian government."

Vehicles were bought to truck the goods from Dili to the hinterland of Timor, and helicopters and fixed wing aircraft were chartered for drops. In respect to the aircraft, the Peat, Marwick report notes:

"The contracts, although subject to close scrutiny by the ICRC, were signed by officers of the PMI and consequently all payments in respect of them have been made through the PMI."

But despite these efforts to distribute the goods to the East Timorese,

"transportation never reached planned levels during the period under review, and substantial supplies relating to the first (ICRC) appeal still remained in the warehouses in East Timor at 30 April 1980."

Of the 4,310.9 metric tons of commodities sent to East Timor, the Peat, Marwick report notes the stock cards sent from Dili to Jakarta as indicating all but 51.9 metric tones arrived. Although the Peat, Marwick team did not go further east than Jakarta, they conclude that

"our review of the documentation relating to the receipt and distribution of relief goods in the field, and our visit to Jakarta indicate that systems for the control of cash expenditures were satisfactorily applied, and that orderly control was maintained over supplies obtained for the joint PMI/ICRC action at the various warehouses and village stores."

Catholic Relief Services has never given a public accounting – to its donors, to the press or to the general public – for its activities in East Timor. The US Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance of AID made available the 15 September 1980 report of the CRS Director in Indonesia, Frank Carlin, under request within the terms of the Freedom of Information Act. In this 15 September 1980 report Frank Carlin notes *inter alia* that he was out of the region (mostly in the US) from January 1980 until 1 September 1980 due to malaria and hepatitis. His report includes a request for extension of the Office of US Foreign Disaster Assistance aid through the end of 1980 because CRS has only been able to distribute about 12,000 metric tons (there are three differing figures in the report) of commodities and still has 4,811 metric tons in stock in Dili awaiting distribution. Among the obstacles to distribution that Carlin cited were

"Security factors at all levels in Jakarta, Denpasar, Dili and throughout the 13 districts of East Timor."

Moreover, the

"Indonesian government due to internal considerations rejected our application to provide 13 doctors graduated from medical schools in Java. . . . Therefore our plan to provide doctors was not realised and instead our medical program was carried out by 19 East Timorese paramedics."

Catholic Relief Services, according to then Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian Affairs, Richard Holbrook's testimony to the US House Sub-Committee on Foreign Operations of the Committee on Appropriations of the US Congress on 10 June 1980 had received $11,000,820 in disaster relief funds and Title II PL480 commodities. Mr Holbrook itemized 20,811.4 metric tons of commodities valued at $7,553,340 allocated to CRS. According to Regulation 11 of the Agricultural Trade Development and Assistance Act of the US, agencies that accept food commodities under Title II of the Food for Peace program must have a US citizen in charge of all Title II programs in Third World countries. In fact, CRS' director was repatriated out of the region for nine months. CRS officials rarely left Jakarta for Dili; in effect they, like the ICRC, handed over their program of disaster assistance to the belligerents, those who had created the disaster – the Indonesian Armed Forces. The CRS program was dependent on Indonesian government transport; there were no Americans overseeing the receipt and distribution of the goods in Dili or the villages of the hinterland. If we take CRS' account sheet as submitted to the US Foreign Disaster Assistance Office at its face value even though it was drawn up (in English and Indonesian) by unsupervised agents in Dili, it reports receipts of only 11,853.5 metric tons of food commodities plus 490 metric tons of rice and corn seed. What happened to the other 3,986 metric tons that Holbrooke told the US Congress in June 1980 had been sent to CRS for distribution in East Timor?

It should be possible to trace all shipments of PL480 goods from the United States to the recipient countries through the US Department of Agriculture. Inquiries revealed that the procurements by CRS for Indonesia as a whole in the period Agusut 1979-August 1980 totalled 26,140 metric tons of commodities, of which 7,600 metric tons were diverted from CRS programs in the Philippines, Tanzania, Bolivia, Guatemala and Sierra Leone to CRS in Indonesia. These diversions were subsequently replaced by diversions from CRS' India program. This is a version of the peanut and shell game. Shipping information however was only available from the US Department of Agriculture on 15,765 metric tons, all of which was carried on vessels owned by Lykes Shipping Company and all but 3,000 tons of which was unloaded at the Javanese ports of Surabaya and Cilacap, and the Kalimantan port of Pontianak. The *Margaret Lykes* apparently was able to unload 3,000 metric tons of food commodities in Dili in September or October 1979. It is not clear why other shipments were not sent directly to Timor.

Confidence in the reliability of government record keeping was however weakened by the receipt of a different response to the same inquiry from the Office of US Foreign Disaster Assistance. According to that Office, 20,357 metric tons of food commodities were shipped for CRS use in East Timor in the year since August 1979; again the ships listed are all of the Lykes line, but none of the sailings match those of the US Department of Agriculture's Department of Ocean Freight Transportation.

According to this response, three of the Lykes ships (none of them the *Margaret Lykes*) delivered 7,220.2 metric tons of commodities directly to Dili in November and December 1979 but the remaining 13,137.5 metric tons were sent to Surabaya and Jakarta and ports in the islands of Flores, Sumba and West Timor. The shipment to Jakarta, 5.2 metric tons of non fat dried milk, has no correlation on CRS' Timor receipts although Holbrooke included an item of 5.4 metric tons of NFDM in his summary of shipments.

What is missing? *If* we accept the CRS/East Timor reports on their face value, the US Office of Disaster Assistance apparently sent

64.2 metric tons more corn-soy-milk
3.2 metric tons corn-soy-bulgur
609.00 metric tons more rice
7673.00 metric tons more corn and
5.2 metric tons of non-fat-dried-milk

than has been distributed in East Timor, of which 4,811 metric tons were sitting in Dili warehouses in September 1980. But that is the arithmetic only if we accept the receipts prepared by Indonesians in Dili without the supervision of CRS personnel. In July 1980 the Office of Disaster Assistance cabled the US Embassy in Jakarta regarding the *diversion* of food from Nusa Tenggara Timur. "Please clarify what happened to that NTT diversion and its relationship, if any, to the 3,432 mt [of corn called forward by CRS at this time]." It is unimaginable that in any other situation such loose accounting would be accepted. In this case, receipts of food aid by the aggressor are not only accepted by both ICRC and CRS, but by the US AID Office of Disaster Assistance even when discrepancies are apparent on the face of the receipts.

Whatever CRS relief aid was reaching the East Timorese was cut off in December 1980. At this time Henry Kamm reported in the *New York Times:*

"Another reason for the total cutoff of the food effort and the phasing out of medical relief is believed to be the continuation of low level of warfare between the remnants of Fretilin, East Timor's independence group, and the Indonesian Army. . . . The Timorese urged, in an interview, that foreign aid groups try to keep a lasting presence in East Timor. 'If the foreigners leave,' he said, 'it will be tragic for the Timorese people. First, they give assistance. And besides, when the foreigners are there, the military men are afraid. When they go away, warplanes will come back to East Timor, and warships also."

In April 1981 the last of the foreigners left with the closure of the ICRC program in East Timor. Within weeks the warplanes had come back to East Timor. 8,000 Indonesian troops were sent to reinforce the 30,000 already there (after 6 years of occupation). Australia's Defence Minister acknowledged that 35,000 men were employed on military exercises in East Timor in late 1981. In October 1981 *Operasi Keamanan* began. Ablebodied men were taken from their villages and forced to make a "fence of legs" for Indonesian soldiers who fanned out over the countryside in search of the 'handful' of Fretilin guerrillas who are sufficient to keep the country under such security for six years. In November 1981 Robin Morison, Secretary for Emergency and Rehabilitation Programmes of the Commission on Inter-Church Aid, Refugees and World Service of the World Council of Churches, circulated a letter on "East Timor – Effects of Civil Strife" after a visit to Indonesia in October 1981. Mr Morison discussed the East Timor relief program with Drs. Hermanus Pooroe of the Department on Participation in Development of the Council of Churches in Indonesia (DGI). He noted that:

"With regard to funding, DGI has certainly not received enough money to allow it to carry out the programme it envisaged, *had it received permission to do so.* The CICARWS appeal of 6 June 1980 was for US$400,000. Up to the time of my visit, US$100,000 had been received by CICARWS and transferred to DGI. Of this, US$60,000 was provided in 1980 and US$40,000, *although debited to WCC's bank in April 1981 was not credited to DGI until September 1981.* Both DGI and WCC Finance Department are still investigating this delay.

I expressed the opinion to Drs. Pooroe that one reason for the lack of response to the appeal was certainly *the absence of any reporting on the utilisation* of the money sent in 1980 for emergency use, in particular, and on DGI activities in East Timor in general." [emphases added].

Even more disturbing was Mr Morison's report that

"The DGI proposed that it hold the emergency funds sent, as it is expected that, early in 1982, substantial humanitarian needs will be uncovered when the Indonesian Army completes its campaign to subdue the Fretilin forces in the Los Palos area at the eastern end of the Island."

Will "substantial humanitarian needs" be "uncovered" or will they be created by this Indonesian campaign? Are international aid agencies such as ICRC, CRS and WCC supplying food aid to suffering Timorese or to the Indonesian Armed Forces? How much food aid is reaching East Timor? Why is the territory still cordonned off after nearly 7 years of Indonesian military occupation? Are Australian governmental and non-governmental agencies supplying food aid to suffering Timorese or to Indonesian occupying forces?

The recent sanguine reports from former Prime Minister Gough Whitlam and *Sydney Morning Herald* journalist Peter Hastings do not serve to answer these questions. Hastings wrote that "the (US) Catholic Relief Services lent ships and barges for transport of food and drugs to warehouses in famine-stricken areas such as Laga." In fact, by its own report, Catholic Relief Services had the greatest difficulty procuring landing barges, trucks and helicopters to distribute goods in East Timor, spending a total of $1,936,095 to 1 September 1980 hiring such transportation from Indonesian contractors. CRS was frequently denied infrastructural support by the Indonesian forces in East Timor, and had to use such government-owned transportation as it was on occasion offered for lack of any alternative.

We believe that it is imperative that the Australian Senate address itself to the question of whether there is now a crisis situation in East Timor – in food supplies, agricultural reconstruction, health issues as well as security. We suggest that the only way of answering these questions is for a non-partisan, preferably international, commission of enquiry to visit the territory and review the situation. Seven years after the Indonesian invasion of this territory, we hope that the Australian Government will support such an inquiry.

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